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MT. HUANGSHAN

296

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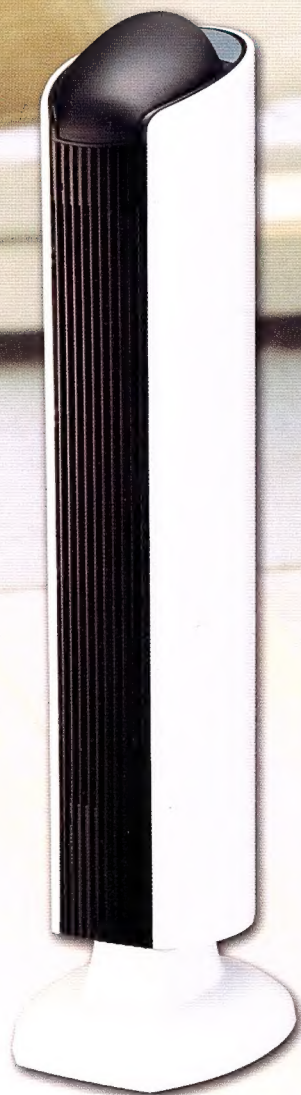
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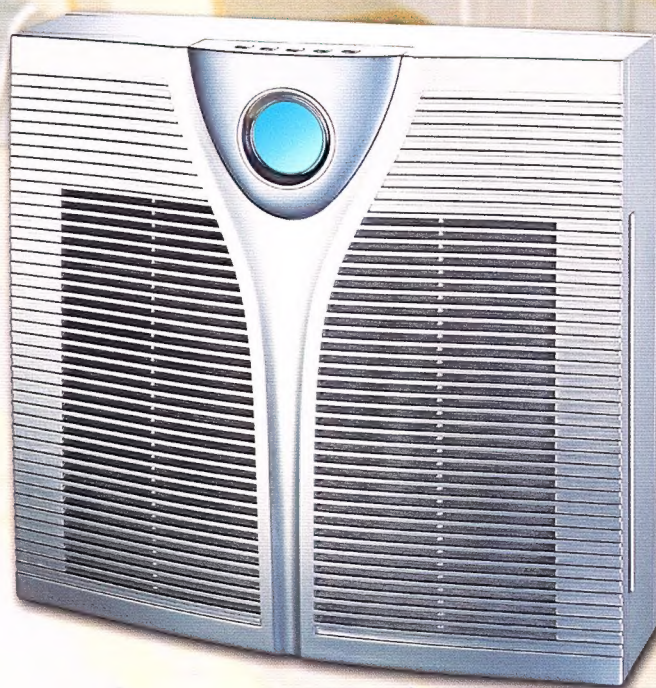
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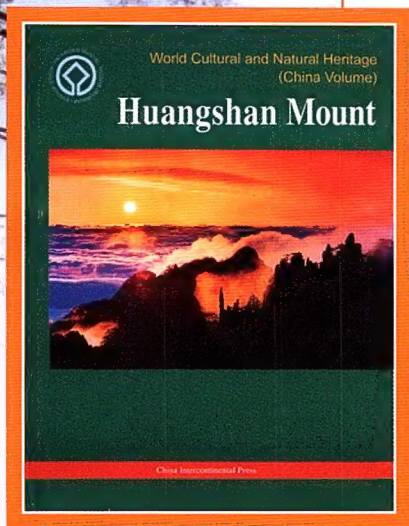
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Mt. Huangshan, situated in the south of Anhui Province, is one of the most famous scenic areas in China. Being put into the World Heritage List, it is also granted with two laurels of cultural heritage and natural heritage by the UNESCO's World Heritage Commission.

The landscape of the mountain is a typical granite hoodoo landform shaped during the long geological periods by several tectonic movements in the crust. Mt. Huangshan has long been famous for its strange-looking pine trees, grotesque rocks, sea of clouds and hot springs.

All over one thousand metres above sea level, there are 77 peaks in the scenic area of almost two hundred square kilometres. Granite rock forests and rock columns together with massive rocks scatter everywhere. Moreover, Mt. Huangshan is a diverse ecosystem with a treasure of wildlife. There are approximately 1 450 species of plants, 300 species of vertebrates and 170 species of birds.

Combined unique scenery and magnificent sea of clouds, the beauty of Mt. Huangshan has continued to fascinate endless visitors. Catch a glimpse of its glory in this "Huangshan Mount" pictorial that is filled with breath-taking images taken by our team of photographers!



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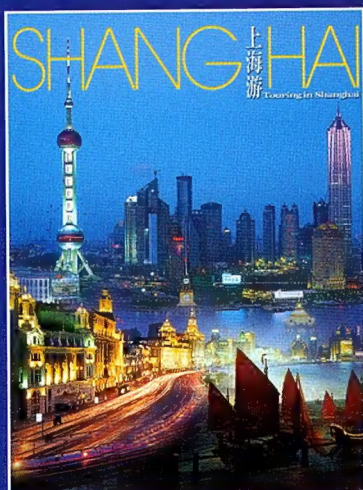
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through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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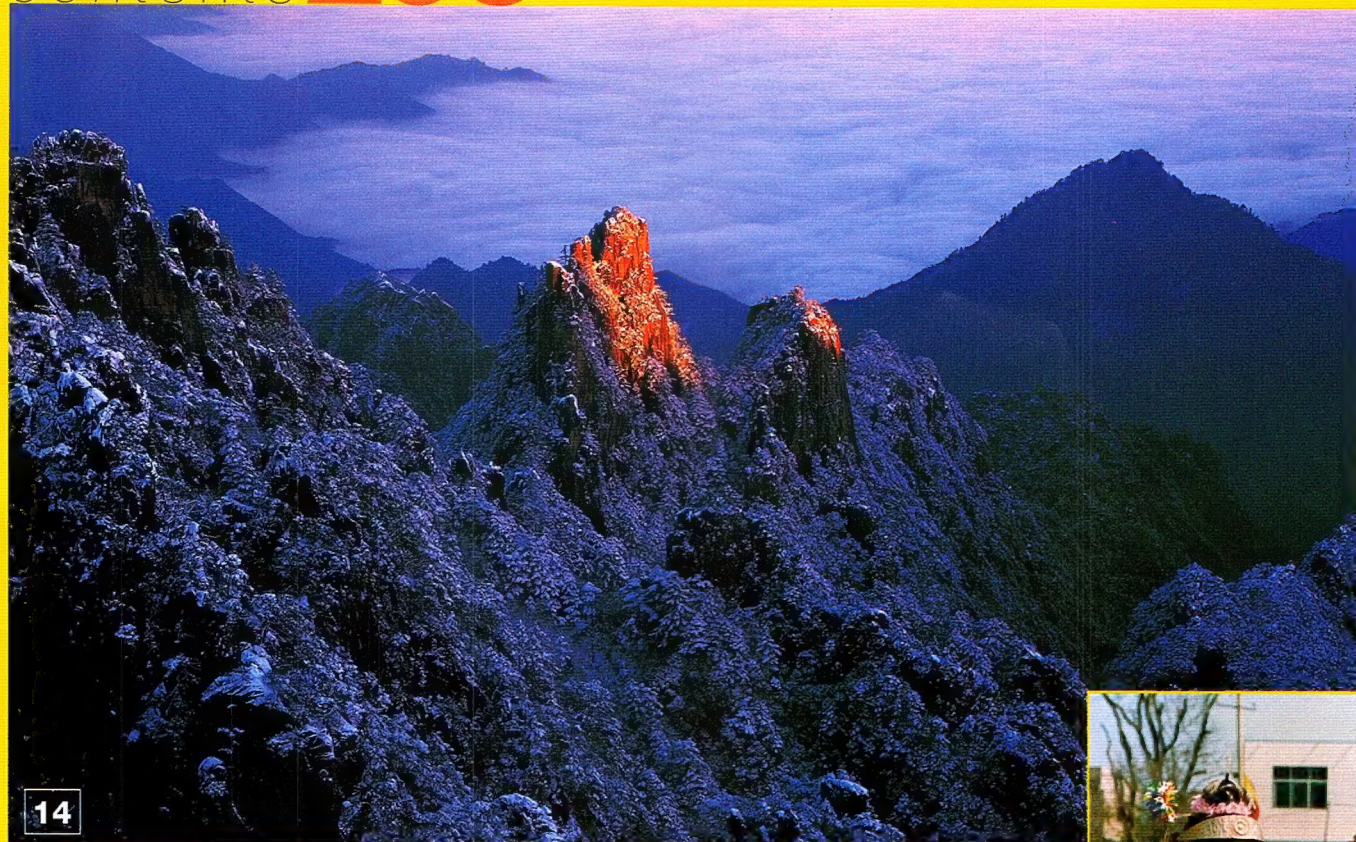
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14



58



64



72



80

- 7 From the Editor**
- 10 Update**
- 12 Travel Notes**
- 14 Feature**
 - A Glacial Sea of Clouds — Mt. Huangshan**
 - Photos by Niu Bendong, Guan Feng, Huang Songhui and Chan Yat Nin*
 - Article by Mickey Ching*
- 58 Customs**
 - Glittering Silver — Miao Lusheng Festival**
 - Photos by Article by Zhao Xiaying*
- 60 Huayao: A Reclusive Tribe in the Mountain**
 - Photos by Article by Lao Hou*
- 64 Discoveries**
 - The Fate of Chuan Opera**
 - Photos by Article by Chen Jin*
- 72 Linxia — A Land of Unique Muslim Culture**
 - Photos by Article by Du Dianwen*
- 80 The Ancient Battlefield of Wuding River**
 - Photos & Article by Shi Baoxiu*
- 90 Excursion**
 - Tour in Shenzhen by Metro**
 - Photos & Article by Waliya*
- 92 Global Chinese**
 - The Revival of a Forgotten Village: Sujiawei**
 - Photos & Article by Waliya*



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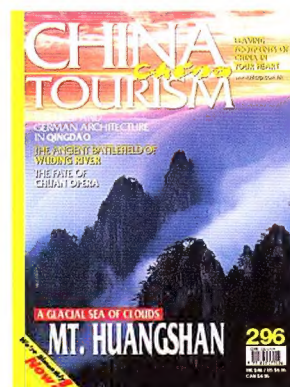
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- 96 City Snap**
The Beer and German Architecture of Qingdao
Photos by Hou Heliang Article by Anita Yeung
- 104 Photo Album**
A Family of the Northeastern China
Photos & Article by Wang Fuchun
- 112 On the Way**
My Road Journey of 6,000 km in China
Photos & Article by Lu Jia'neng
- 116 Highlight**
Urumqi — The Charming Land of Snow
- 126 Profile**
The Highway to Romance
Photos provided by Gao Shujun Article by Huang Yanhong
- 130 My Travel Writing Dream**
Photos provided by Jin Ling Article by Jackie Tsang
- 134 Photography**
Tibetan New Year at Langmu Temple
Photos & Article by Huang Songhui
- 138 When and How to Use Your Flash**
Photos & Article by Chan Yat Nin
- 141 Calendar**
- 143 Next Issue**



Mt. Huangshan
(by Guan Feng)



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Advertising Dept: ad@hkctp.com.hk

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Photo Library: plib@hkctp.com.hk

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No.296 Mar/Apr 2005

As seen from Aoyu Peak (by Guan Feng)



FROM THE EDITOR

Mt. Huangshan with a Myriad of Different Faces

Mt. Huangshan lives up to its reputation of having the best mountain scenery in China. Composed of wind swept pines, remarkable rocks and seas of clouds, the peaks have inspired art, poetry, and romance as well as attracted numerous visitors ever since the day it was first treaded on.*

In search of elements that may have overlooked by experienced travellers, we decided to have a first-timer to cover this issue's story. Due to the mountains' long-lived fame and glory, our young journalist took the assignment as seriously as a faithful believer going on a pilgrimage. Curious, eager yet a bit timid, she experienced the highs and lows of the journey as often as the changing mountain weather. In the end, she battled with the wind, cold and thunderstorm to reach the highest peak, and finally saw the first snow on the last day of her trip.

In addition to bringing you a myriad of different faces of Huangshan Mountains, we also introduced its lesser-known peripheral attractions such as the serene Xidi Ancient Town, the elegant Tunxi Street, the historic Tangyue Archway Complex, etc. Hopefully the delightful journey of our novice journalist and her fresh pair of eyes would recall the memory of your first trip.



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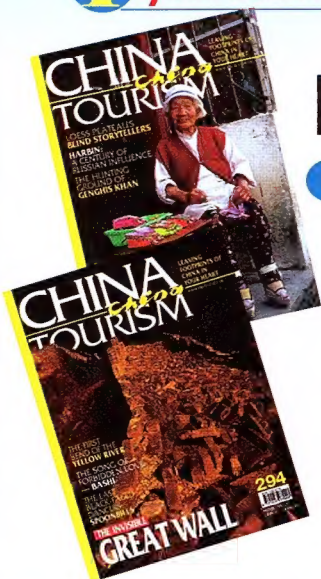
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The beginning of Chinese New Year (February, 2005) is normally a time for reflection and new direction, and we're starting this year by going **bimonthly with 56 more pages per issue**, giving you more in-depth coverage on topics that you're interested in. To ensure that a trail of footprints of China will be left in your heart, we will keep on adding a variety of new columns and page elements in the future, with "Action Buzz", "Flea Market" and "Let's Shop" being the starters.

Asides from bringing you the newest update, practical travel tips, street smart discounts, souvenir ideas and exotic adventures, we will also offers breadth and depth in issues that shaped China today.

With the new look, we continue to strive to better meet the needs of our readers!

We're bimonthly now!

Q & A:

When is the change effective?

China Tourism is going bimonthly (6 times a year), beginning with the March/April issue (no 296) in 2005.

What will happen to the rest of my issue subscription?

Nothing. If you signed on to China Tourism for a year, you'll still get 12 issues, regardless. But beginning in February 2005, the new yearly subscription will be 6 issues.

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Beijing to Restrict Construction of Hotel and Mall

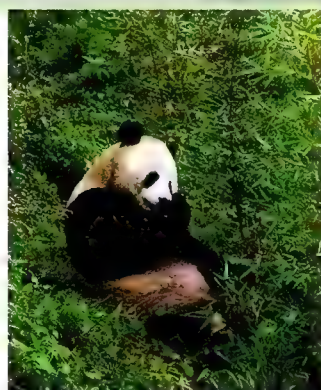
The municipal government of Beijing will restrain the structure and scale of real estate development in the city. The municipal government will impose strict limitations on the construction of office buildings, apartments, hotels and big shopping malls inside the Third Ring Road.

Scientists Research Panda Blood

Chinese scientists will conduct a research on the blood types of the giant panda as a further step towards saving the endangered species.

China's Conservation and Research Centre for the Giant Panda, located in Sichuan Province of southwestern China, will undertake the research. The centre has 81 giant pandas from different areas, representing different groups.

It is hoped that defining the blood types of giant pandas in captivity could help saving wild pandas.



Seven More Parks Planned This Year

Shenzhen will build seven more parks this year. Buxinshan, Luofang and Honggang parks will be built in Luohu District, Yinhushan and Meilinsan parks in Futian and Antuoshan Park in Nanshan. A park designed for children will also be built on Qiaoxiang Road in Futian District, on more than 20 ha of land, which is four times the size of the existing Children's Park in Luohu District.



Shenzhen already has 179 parks, including 21 at municipal level, 13 at district level and 145 others. In the next five years, Shenzhen would build 100 more parks to make Shenzhen "a city of parks".

Shikumen Renovations Begin

Renovate of shikumen houses in downtown Shanghai will begin, to return them to the way they looked 70 years ago. After relocating the families living there, the government will open bidding for foreign and local companies interested in conducting the face-lift on Jianyeli—which is a very typical example of the city's shikumen homes. Built in the early 1930s, Jianyeli has 22 rows including 260 connected two-story houses.

Shikumen houses are regarded as the "living fossils" of the city. After Jianyeli is renovated, it will be either sold or rented out with the original residents having first chance to buy the new homes.



"Marine Silk Road" Museum Will House Ancient Wreck

Set on the beach of Yangjiang's Hailing Island, 200 km from Guangzhou, the China Marine Silk Road Museum, with an investment of ¥190 million, is scheduled to be completed and opened before the end of 2007. It mainly collect and exhibit ancient vessels and their contents, to be salvaged from the South China Sea.

Covering an area of more than 130,000 m², the museum will be the largest theme museum of its kind in Asia.

The most exciting part of the museum will be a huge crystal case. The Nanhai No.1 vessel sank about 1,000 years ago, 20 m under the waters, 20 nautical mi away from Hailing Island. A study centre of the China Marine Silk Road will be also set up in the museum, looking at social and economic development in the southern Chinese region in ancient times.

A diving club, a sailing club, a pedestrian shopping street and other facilities will also be built near the museum.

Beijing Investing ¥40 billion to Build New Subways

Since the beginning of the new century, Beijing has further accelerated the construction of its rail-based transportation system and has gradually perfected its municipal rail-based transport network. It has taken concerted effort to establish a comprehensive, modern city transport system that is in line with the city's development and progress, with public transport as the main focus, and the rapid rail-based transport system as the core.

At present, the Beijing subway lines No. 4, No. 5 and No. 10 are still under construction, with a total track length of more than 88 km and a total investment of over ¥40 billion and with 34 stations being worked on.

By 2008, Beijing will have basically developed a more scientifically reasonable rail transport infrastructure, covering the major commercial, tourist and residential areas in the city.



Traditional Chinese Medicine Bids for World Heritage Status

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) could join the ranks of the world's masterpieces if an application to UNESCO is successful.



TCM could join Chinese arts like Guqin Music and Kunqu Opera as "world intangible heritages" if the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine gets its way.

Once the application is approved by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the protection and development of traditional Chinese medicine will be pushed forward.

Largest Monitor Station for Sand and Wind Established

China has just launched a new open-air monitoring station for sand and wind, the largest of its kind in the world.

Located in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the station covers two square kilometres. Its operation will play an important role in sand and desert research in the surrounding areas.



Lab Set up for Polar Survey and Mapping in Heilongjiang

China has set up a laboratory for polar survey and mapping in the northeastern Heilongjiang Province to enhance its polar research capacity.

The laboratory is expected to enhance China's polar research capacity by providing precision survey and mapping services, as well as upgrading the remote sensing information technology.

The new establishment is also of significance in academic research in fields such as geodynamics, remote sensing and geoscience information.

The State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping has overseen the establishment of the new laboratory, which is designed to be one of its key national research institute.



China to Aid Ethnic Groups

A big boost in aid to China's ethnic groups has been announced in a five-year-plan. It gives ¥5.4 billion of economic aid to 22 of the country's ethnic groups.

The money is to be spent mainly on the construction of infrastructure projects, involving road building and telecommunications. Money will also go to agricultural subsidies. Of China's 56 ethnic groups, 22 having a population lower than 100,000. They live across the country in 10 provinces and regions.



SHANGHAI More Free Parks

With 24 more free parks open to public, 120 parks in Shanghai, or nearly 90% of local parks, are expected to be free of charge. There are currently 136 parks in Shanghai, among which 96 of them are free parks.

Except 16 parks, including Yuyuan Garden, Shanghai Daguan Yuan Garden, Shanghai Zoo, Shanghai Botanic Garden and parks invested by companies such as the Century Park, the other 120 parks will be free of charge.

Shanghai will establish 2,100 ha of new green space, with 1,000 ha of them public green space. The city's public green spaces will reach 11 m² per capita.

BEIJING New Silk Market Opens Bids

The popular tourist shopping haunt, the Silk Market, is cutting its vendor rental fees by 30%. For 20 years, it was home to 400 merchants. The outdoor market was famous among foreign tourists for inexpensive silk products and Chinese souvenirs. 30,000 people visited the market each day. It was closed down at the end of last year for building indoor facility. But soaring rental fees have kept many shopkeepers from renewing their contracts. The average monthly rent for a single booth will be up to 20,000 yuan. Now the developer has decided to lower rental rates. The new market has more than 16,000 retail booths.



GANSU Earliest Paper Painting

Archaeologists have discovered a paper painting, dating back about 1,600 years, possibly China's earliest known example of the medium, in northwest China's Gansu Province. The painting, 80 cm long and 40 cm wide, was discovered on a wooden coffin unearthed from a tomb built in the Wei Kingdom and Jin Dynasty period (220-420) in Yumen City.

Painted on the pure white paper is a fat woman dressed in bright colours and wearing a high peaked hat, ready to go on a journey. In front of the woman is a tall black horse led by a man and after her is a double-wheeled van pulled by oxen.

The painting vividly depicted the lives of people who lived in the area 1,600 years ago.

TIBET 20 Years of Research Completed

Experts have completed a two-decade-long comprehensive investigation into the folk art of China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

The research, the largest ever undertaken, has collected about 5,000 photographs, 1,000 hours of audio recordings and 700 hours of video tape, plus numerous written materials.

As a result of the investigation, artistic styles and forms thought to have disappeared have been rediscovered. It will take time to categorise and analyse the materials before they are fully published.



NINGXIA Displaying Hui Culture

In Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, northwest China, an exhibition centre has opened to display the Hui group's special art and culture.

The newly opened exhibition centre displays more than 200 items, all with their own historical and cultural value. As Hui people are fond of colourful clothing, the centre has a fine collection of Hui clothes, accessories and even wedding dresses. It has taken over 10 years for the scholars to collect the items. The centre has three themes—Hui history, Hui Customs, and Hui paintings and calligraphy.

There are more than nine million of Hui population in China today. It is the third biggest ethnic group and a unique addition to the country's rich cultural diversity.



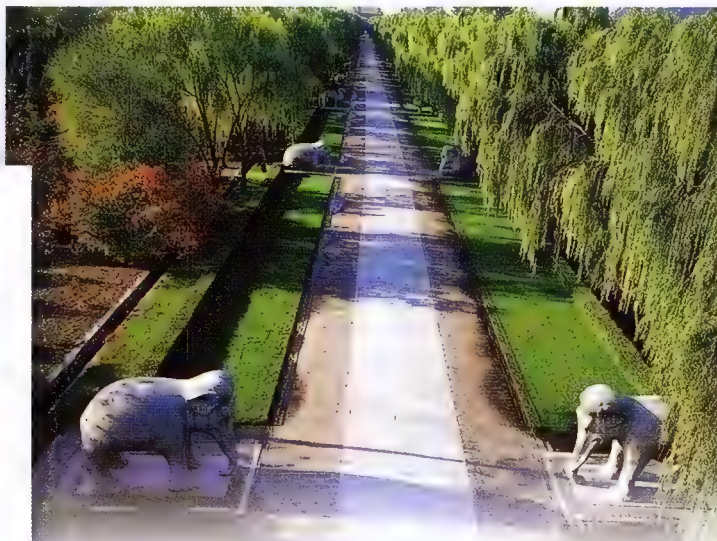
BEIJING **Museum Leaps into Digital Future**

One of China's top museums, the Millennium Art Museum (MAM) has introduced a plan to make art more accessible to the public, more interactive, and more universal in appeal.

Part of the Millennium's new art centre, the digital gallery, resembles the Web-wired art tableaux scattered through the hyper-high-tech home of Microsoft founder Bill Gates: giant plasma screens displaying impressionist paintings that morph into surrealist sculptures or futuristic films in an endlessly changing digital montage.

The museum has also added a state-of-the-art video theatre and four smaller exhibition halls (all connected to the World Wide Web) to make the e-arts centre the most advanced in China.

The Millennium's exhibition will increasingly focus on works in new media, which cover the spectrum of digital videos, Internet art, digital photography, and other forms of digital imagery, including animations and virtual reality.



TIBET **Fresco Repair in Full Swing**

The maintenance project of ruined frescoes in three major monasteries in Lhasa, the capital of Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region is making headway with more than 1,000 m² of the relics already repaired, with respect to their original style.

Ruined frescoes in the Potala Palace, Tibet's holiest shrine, have been repaired and the renovation of those at Sagya Lamasery—which contains numerous rare religious relics—is well in progress. Also due for repair is the Norbug Linkha Park, the Summer Palace of the Dalai Lamas.

Commenced in June 2002 with an investment of ¥330 million, the project is expected to last five years. The old walls will be reinforced and some ruined palaces will be restored to their original appearance.



BEIJING **Repairing Ming Tomb**

About ¥38 million has been allocated to repair the World Cultural Heritage List site Qingling Tomb, one of the 13 Ming Emperors' Tombs located in the capital Beijing. The face-lift work for Qingling Tomb began on Tuesday.

The Qingling Tomb was built for Zhu Changluo, the 14th emperor of Ming Dynasty and his three wives.

According to historical records, the emperor was on the throne for merely 29 days and then died. Therefore, it took only four months to complete his tomb.

With the passage of time, the Qingling Tomb was in a dangerous situation and in urgent need of repair.

The whole project is expected to complete next year. Before 2008, another five Ming Emperors Tombs will also be repaired.

SHANGHAI **New Botanical Garden**

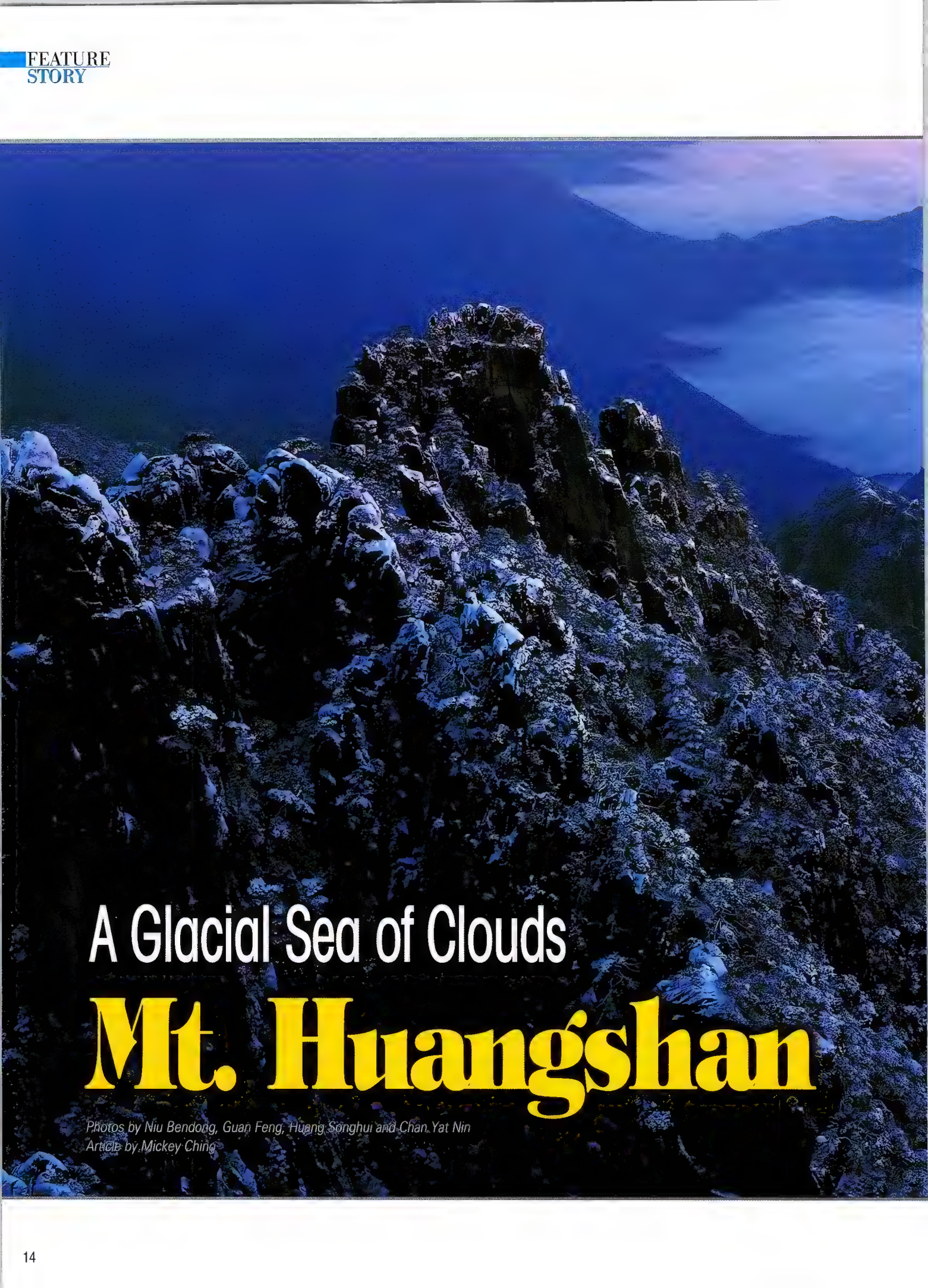
The city plans to build a new botanical park, which will be three and a half times larger than the current Shanghai Botanical Garden.

The park, to be located in suburban Songjiang District, will cover an area of 2.1 million m².

He said the existing botanical garden, which was founded in 1978, has been surrounded by residential buildings, and has no further space for expansion.

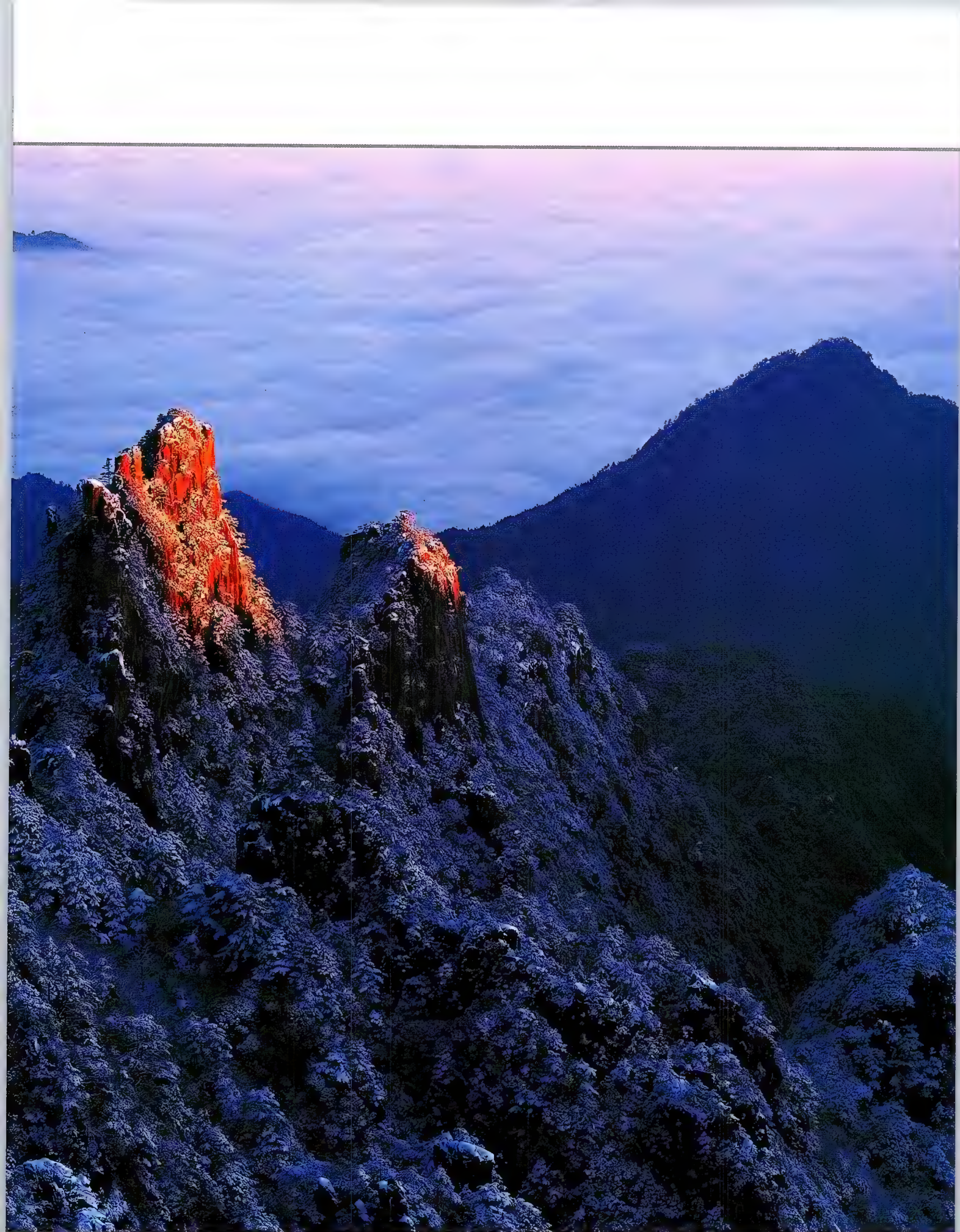
Colours will play a vital role in designing the layout of the new park. Plants and flowers will be placed in separate scenic regions according to their different colours. A collection and protection centre for rare and endangered plant species will also be established in the park, and display some of the world's most precious plants.





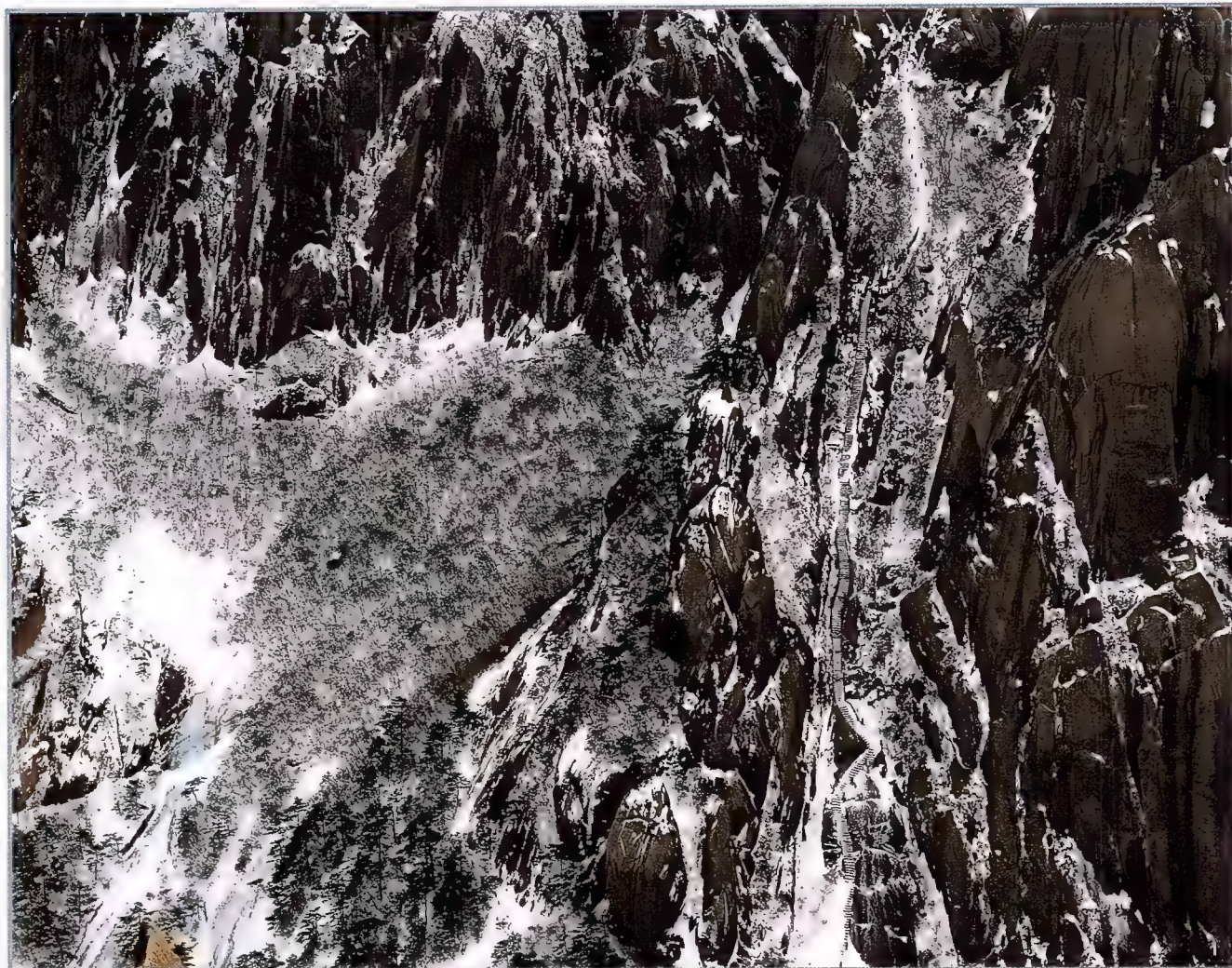
A Glacial Sea of Clouds **Mt. Huangshan**

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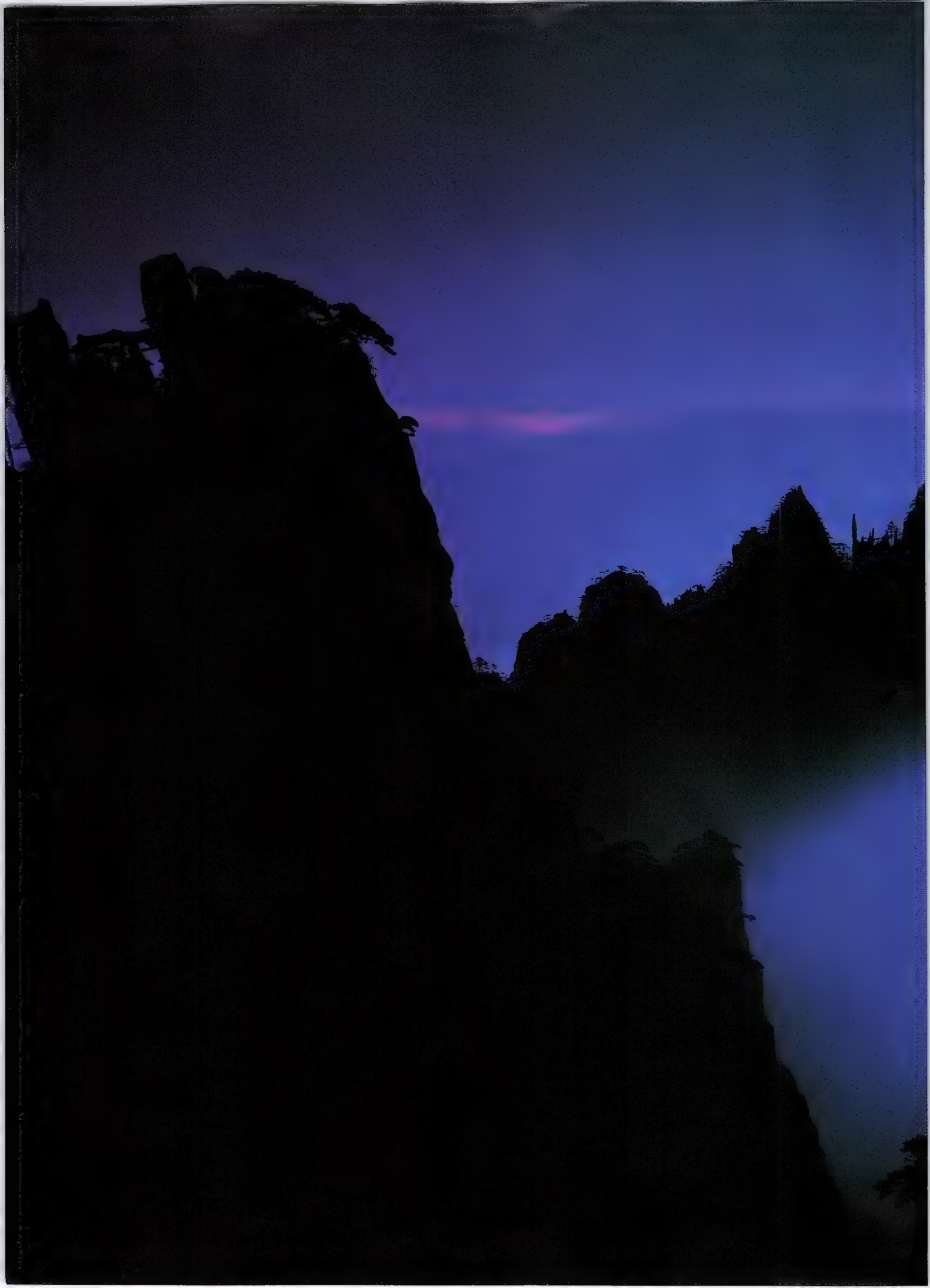
The clear-up view of Huangshan Mountains after snow (by Guan Feng)

Mt. Huangshan



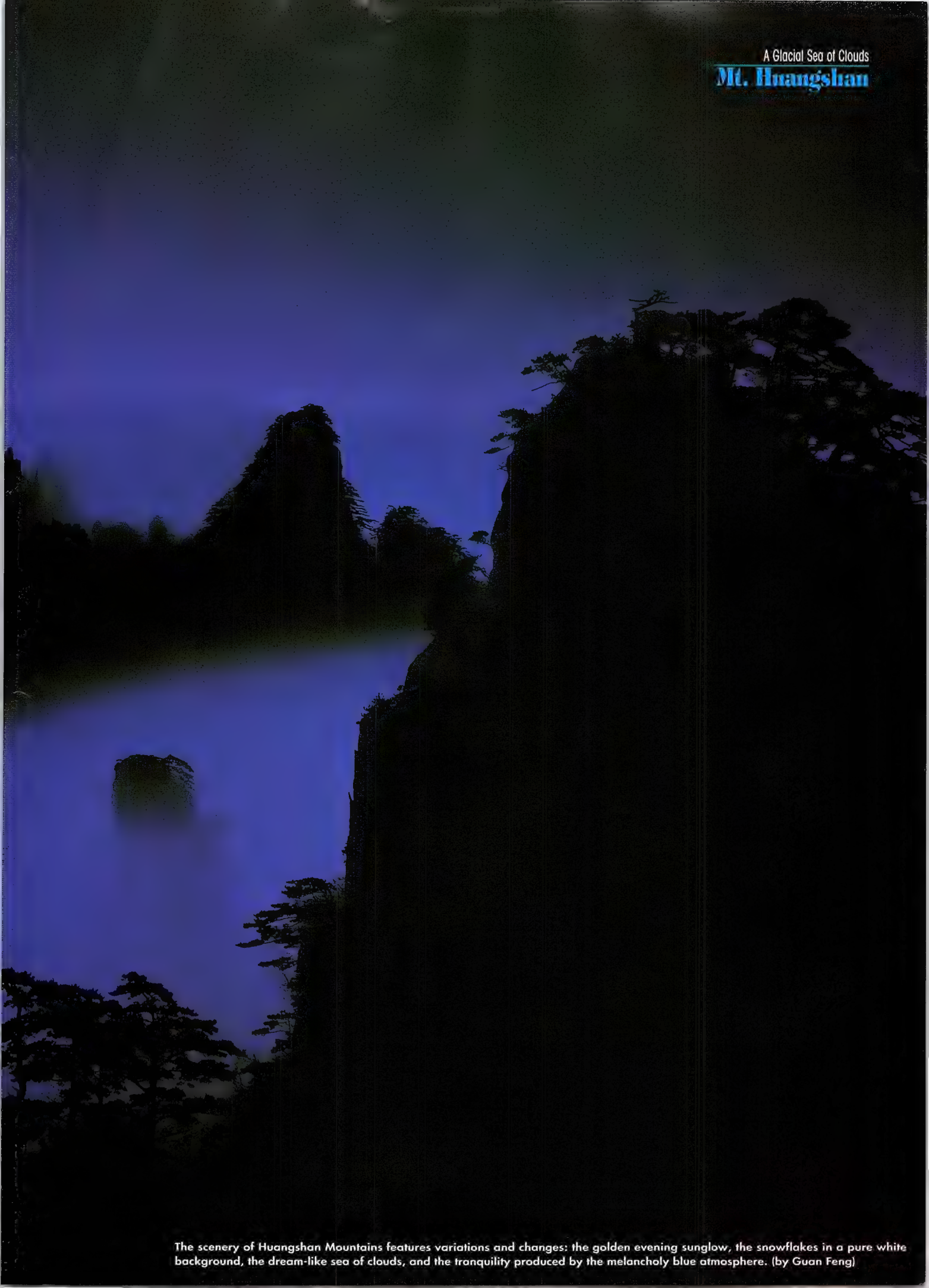
1. Tiandu Peak, also known as the "Celestial Capital", is said to be the home of immortals. There are over 1,500 stairs on the scaling ladder zigzagging up the cliff of 1,810 m. (by Niu Bendong)
2. Yuping Peak, one of the 36 minor peaks of Huangshan Mountains, got its name from its shape of a jade screen. (by Niu Bendong)





A Glacial Sea of Clouds

Mt. Huangshan



The scenery of Huangshan Mountains features variations and changes: the golden evening sunglow, the snowflakes in a pure white background, the dream-like sea of clouds, and the tranquility produced by the melancholy blue atmosphere. (by Guan Feng)





I have long known the beauty of Huangshan Mountains,
and that the most beautiful moment is when they are covered with snow.

In order to witness the first snow in Huangshan Mountains in winter, I went to Huangshan Mountains in the middle of December, waited from fine weather with blue sky and white clouds to that with dancing snowflakes. And I was lucky enough to witness the most beautiful moment of Huangshan Mountains.

After my breakfast at a hotel in Tunxi Town where I stayed, I put on my backpack and set out at about eight o'clock. On my way to the bus station by way of Zhenghai Bridge, I heard once again the residents washing clothes by the river. I looked up at the sky. Another foggy day. It was not so cold but it remained overcast for nearly a week. I wondered about the weather in the mountains. The owner of the hotel told me that the weather in the mountains was completely different from that in Tunxi Town. I assured myself that the weather in the mountains might be different.

My Way to Huangshan Mountains

When I got to Tunxi bus station, I hurried looking for a bus to Huangshan Mountains scenic spot. It took much effort to get rid of the middle-aged ladies trying to sell me tickets and eventually got on a minibus to Taiping by way of Huangshan Mountains. I had hardly settled down in my seat when it pulled out. I was the last passenger. Yet, I was not that optimistic: it took only one hour to get to Tangkou Town near Huangshan Mountains, but it was quite common for a bus to travel for three hours, stopping now and then and waiting for passengers. I opened the window to enjoy the view outside, killing time.

Strangely that day, the bus passed Wan'an, Lantian and Rucun smoothly. It stopped twice but did not wait for passengers. After about one hour and a half, I could see a sign reading "Tangkou Town". For fear that I might miss



the right place to get off, I reminded the conductor many times in the best of my Mandarin, "Please tell me when we get to Huangshan Mountains." But every time I said that, the conductor just gestured me to stay seated. Then the bus came to a stop which as far as I learned was the place to get off. Passengers told me that it was the right place, and I was about to get off. Unexpectedly, the conductor stopped me, "Not yet!" It was Tangkou Town, and I knew for sure that I should change for another bus along the New State Highway to Huangshan Mountains scenic spot. However, as I was not sure enough of the right place, I refrained myself from jumping off. Seated in the bus, I felt puzzled. There were only some passengers heading for Taiping left on the bus. My goodness! Where would he take me? After three more minutes on the bus, I saw a few touring buses. I really couldn't help jumping off. The bus stopped and I readily got off and raced towards the touring buses. What surprised me was that the conductor also jumped off and raced ahead of me. I didn't really understand the situation until I saw the sign board on the

touring buses reading "New State Highway". The conductor was worried that I might fail to find a bus so he took me directly to the right bus station. When he saw the conductor of a bus there, he told the conductor that I was going to Yungu Temple (a cable car terminal in Huangshan Mountains scenic spot). Watching the conductor on his way back, I suddenly felt ashamed and silly. Yet, I really couldn't believe my luck to meet such a nice person.

Missing the Sea of Clouds

The winter is an off-season for tourism in Huangshan Mountains. There were fewer visitors, and there was a bus only every half to one whole hour. Waiting there, I saw the clouds and fog curling among the peaks. I inquired of the conductor about the departure time, the weather in the

In clear weather after the snow, the peaks appeared more splendid. (by Huang Songhui)



mountains, and whether it was likely to snow in the mountains. I had several curt replies, "Half an hour, very good weather, no possibility of snow." Unexpectedly, it was suddenly announced that the bus was to depart very soon. I challenged the conductor, "Who said it would be a whole hour before departure? Who said the weather is fine in the mountains?"

When the bus reached Yungu Temple, it was only 10:30 A.M. It had been quite warm at the foot of the mountains, but in a short moment, I felt a bit cold and had to put on my muffler. Surrounded by the peaks, I lost my sense of direction, and wondered hopelessly about the names of the peaks around me. All I was thinking of was to get to the top as soon as possible. I

was thinking of a picture at the temple after I bought the ticket for the cable car, when a middle-aged conductor of the cable car called out to me, "Get on now, or you will have to wait for another half hour." Another half hour? I didn't want to lose any time, so I had to put the camera back into my backpack and followed the lady into the cable car.

The time I got on the cable car, I realised that there were still a lot of visitors even in this season. The cable car was fully packed and all the good positions had all been taken, leaving me standing near the gate hopelessly. Just as the cable car pulled out, people began shouting, "Sea of clouds! Over there! Sea of Clouds!"

"Where is it? Where is it?" I asked impatiently, taking up



my camera. But there were too many visitors on the cable car. My heavy backpack and thick down wear failed me in my attempt to turn around. I heard other visitors exchanging their remarks, "How splendid!" "How lucky we are to see the sea of clouds!" My God! I could only turn my head around but could see nothing. A few minutes passed, and I had to depart with the unseen sea of clouds and the cable car.

The Sky on Guangming Peak

Getting off at Baie (White Geese) Stop, I was still feeling depressed about my missing the sea of clouds. Looking up into the clear blue sky I was even more

depressed. Didn't clear blue sky mean fine weather? Didn't the fine weather mean no rain? If there were no rain, there would be surely no snow.

The weather was much too good, completely unlike a winter day. As I climbed I took off my muffler and down wear. I saw visitors taking sedan chairs at Baie Stop, but the frightening price, ¥500, put a lot of energy to my legs.

I zigzagged my way by White Geese Villa, No. 701 TV Tower, East Sea Gate, and finally to Guangming

1. Viewing Huangshan Mountains from a hotel window (by Chan Yat Nin)
2. Cladded in a thin coat of snow, the stone lion on Huangshan Mountains took on a lovely and interesting look. (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. The Beihai area after snow was reminiscent of a winter fairy world. (by Chan Yat Nin)





(Brightness) Peak. It was right noon, and there were a stream of visitors, who chose to rest and eat at this spot. I took a look and found it was a touring party from Hong Kong. "We have conquered the highest peak! Victory to us!" The tourists, with walking canes in hand, got excited, and hurried to take pictures in front of the stone monument of Guangming Peak. For a while I itched to tell them that there were the highest peak, Lianhua (Lotus) Peak and the third highest, Tiandu (Celestial Capital) Peak, behind you. The Guangming Peak was only the second highest one. Then I thought better of it when I saw the blue sky. The cloudless sky and the cool breeze made me think that it was not important whether this was the highest peak or not. Standing on Guangming Peak, I felt I was at a point closest to the blue sky.

The Sunset for Me Alone

After the visit to Guangming Peak, I set out on my way back. I chose a route back to Baie Stop, and visit Heihu (Black Tiger) Pines, Wolong (Reposing Dragon) Pines and Shuqin (Harp-like) Pines. Shixin Peak was closed to visitors for rehabilitation. I had to follow the path down to a clearing where touring parties equipped with loudspeakers and fanions were taking pictures there. A tale goes that years back, the greatest poet in the history of China, Li Bai, got an exciting inspiration here for his famous poem and left his brush in the mountains which later turned into a peak. I thought to myself, the great master would have lost all his inspiration if he were to

have been accompanied by such noises.

I hurried to see the sunset as soon as I got to the hotel sitting against Shizi (Lion) Peak and disposed of my baggage. At the reception desk at each of the hotels in Huangshan Mountains, there was a sign showing the sunrise and sunset time for each day. The sunset lasts only a short instant so I had to set out early.

It was 4:30 P.M. when I set out. The wind was already blowing and the temperature had dropped sharply by several degrees. I picked my way up the stairs. Those who were returning from the peak tried to persuade me to give up the attempt, saying that there was nothing worth the effort. Yet, convinced by the tourist's guide that said Shizi Peak was one of the best places to watch the sunset, I was determined to make it.

It was not that difficult to reach the top. It was 5:00 P.M. when I got there and the sun was still high in the west of the sky. But there was only a sloping plot at the top, surrounded by a railing made of iron chains. I was toppling side to side in the wind, really a scaring experience. Only after five minutes, the sun was setting, with flaming sunglow shrouding half of the sky. My head ached in the wind and tears came running. Yet, the sunset was really glorious that day. As I was the only one at the Shizi Peak, I felt that sunset was for me alone.

1. Covered with thick snow, the fairy pines took on a wonderful look.
(by Huang Songhui)
2. The sunrise and sunset of Huangshan Mountain (by Guan Feng)



Changeable Weather of Huangshan Mountains

I took more than half of the day visiting Shigu (Stone Drum) Peak and Xihai (West Sea) Grand Canyon. The weather was fine, except that the wind was blowing a bit hard, and there were some clouds. It was already well into the afternoon after I returned to the hotel and had a rest. I came to the hotel window and unexpectedly found the presence of thick fog outside, looking misty and grey. I came out of Paiyun Pavilion, and was a bit scared at the sudden change of the weather in Huangshan Mountains. Visitors were moving in the direction of Xihai Grand Canyon, in the midst of fog, which made me a bit worried about them. I inquired of the clerk in the hotel about the sudden change of weather, and got an answer that the weather in Huangshan Mountains was just like the face of a baby, which changed easily.

The next morning I woke up to find that the fog refused to disappear. What was worse was that it began drizzling. I came out of Paiyun Pavilion again, yet I could make nothing more of my way but a few steps ahead. But I had to make it to Yuping (Jade Screen) Building and had even planned to conquer Lianhua Peak. I knew I had to climb Guangming Peak and the Baibuyun (One-hundred-step) Ladder. But I was afraid of getting lost in the thick fog when scaling the ladder for the second time. I thought of setting out later. But information from shop assistants near the hotel predicted that the weather might very likely go from bad to worse. I finally took heart of grace, bought a thin raincoat, and set out into the heavy fog.

I felt the wind howling behind me. Usually I was able to tell the direction by recognising landmark buildings and the peaks. But today I had to depend on my sense and the help from the clerks on duty and the dustmen. The wind was so hard that I had given up the idea of an umbrella. Luckily it was only drizzling. Clad in my down wear and the raincoat covering the whole of me, I must have looked like a robot. I was in a dilemma: I had to hurry to reach Lianhua Peak before it rained too hard, yet I had

1. The Lovers' Locks in front of Paiyun Building—bearers of the wishes of numerous lovers (by Chan Yat Nin)

2. The changes of the sea of clouds in Huangshan Mountains entice you to experience the feeling of flying. (by Niu Bendong)









to be very sure of my steps in case I might lose my way in the fog or fall over myself.

My now-fast-then-slow steps made me sweating all over. Only my hands felt the chilliness of the wind. When I passed Xinzhi Pavilion and Feilai (Flying) Stone, I itched to touch it, in the hope of picking some luck. But I only spared a few glimpses at it. When I got over Guangming Peak again, the symbolic ball-shaped observatory was already lost in the fog. I saw nothing but a small shop at Guangming Peak.

It took me nearly two hours to reach Haixin Pavilion from Paiyun Pavilion. I felt weak in my legs. Luckily for me, there were not much forks along the road and I was able to make sure of my position with the help of the maps along the road. When I climbed over Aoyu (Turtle) Peak, two narrow paths confronted me. My view was completely blocked by the fog. With only myself here, I suddenly got a better understanding of the word "hopelessness". Where shall I go, in such a place with the wind and rain? Stay waiting here? I was more than worried. I assured myself to stay calm and not to hurry. I chose the path on the right and headed along. I checked with the first visitor I met that day as I was heading for Lianhua Peak.

The visitor asked me whether I was afraid. I smiled and thanked him, saying nothing. I couldn't say I was not afraid. I was afraid of getting lost, but even more of waiting to be rescued.

Giving up Lianhua Peak

After passing by Aoyu Cave, I was ready to climb the Baibuyun Ladder. I had been informed of the difficulty to face in climbing the ladder. But with the thick fog, I could not see how steep the stairs were. However, it turned out that to climb the ladder in a foggy and rainy day was not as

1. Fairy pines covered with snow (by Guan Feng)

2. Will a touch of Feilai Rock bring real luck? (by Guan Feng)

difficult as I had imagined. I followed the railing on both sides, and was even able to count all the 218 steps!

After I got over the Baibuyun Ladder, what was waiting for me was Lianhua Peak itself. An old man at a small shop along the road told me not to make it. He said it would take half an hour, and what was more, there might be thunders. Perhaps because I thought I had pulled through so many difficulties, and perhaps because of my idea that one could not say he had been to Huangshan Mountains if he had not been to Lianhua Peak, I refused his advice and decided to set out, yet I took a glance at the sign reading "Don't climb in thundering weather!"

The beginning section of the stairs was an easy job. But the higher I climbed, the heavier my legs became. When going through one flight after another, one cave after another, I only felt that the wind was becoming stronger and stronger, and my raincoat was flying wildly in the wind. Finally I caught sight of the peak, just in front of me. I decided to make the last and the strongest attempt to conquer the peak. Then I looked at the dark clouds curling around the peak and felt more than scared. I thought to myself: What would it mean even if I made it?

Sleeping in Yuping Building Hotel that night, I thought over the decision of giving up the attempt to reach Lianhua

Peak. Had I been wise or cowardly? The rain fell nonstop outside and I was to leave Huangshan Mountains.

The First Snow of the Winter

I pulled open the curtain early in the morning and I was stunned by what appeared outside. The rain had stopped, but the windowsill was covered with whiteness. I cleared my eyes. I wasn't dreaming. Tiny snowflakes were falling. I packed up my backpack, put on all my warm-keeping belongings, had a quick breakfast at the hotel and raced to Yuping Building. Everything, including the clearing, the pines, was covered with a thin layer of snow. Perhaps I was the earliest one, for the snow on the ground was undisturbed. Even the dustmen were not yet up to clear the sudden snow.

I had never expected the dream being realised on the last day of my stay in Huangshan Mountains. I took up my camera and took one picture after another of the Huangshan Mountains in snow. It was a pity that while the snow was falling, thick fog had shrouded the whole mountain. The Huangshan Mountains in snow, as I photographed, was grey as in black-and-white pictures.

As the cable cars were under repair at that time, I had



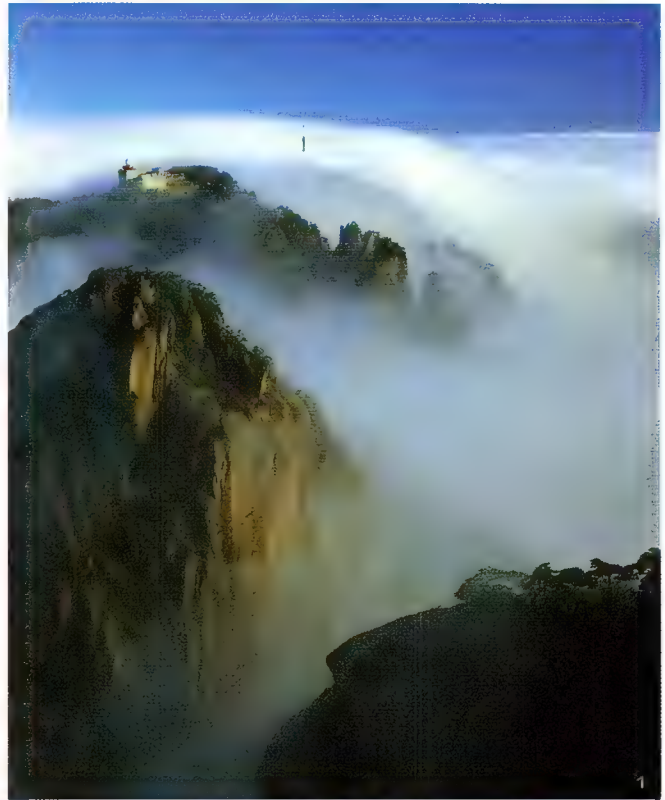
to foot it. I hated to leave in such a hurry. Even with my limbs freezing with the cold, I tried to slow my paces, in order to remember my last day in Huangshan Mountains. What with the numerous thoughts crossing my mind at that time, I forgot to put on the gloves. Exposed in the chilly cold, the joints of my hands ached sharply. My hands were red and swollen with the cold. And I felt nothing when I tried to outspread my fingers. I realised that my hand might be frostbitten if left untended. I had to hurried down the hill with my gloves on.

The visitors at the bottom of the hill learned from my gloves and spiked shoes that it was snowing up in the mountains.

"Why have you come down in such a hurry? Huangshan Mountains are most beautiful after snow!"

This I surely knew. But witnessing the fine, rainy, windy and snowy weather of Huangshan Mountains has already given me the greatest memory.

1. Even with the Guangming Peak hidden in the sea of clouds, the symbolic observatory was visible now and then. (by Xu Xuezhe)
2. It is well worth the effort to climb the mountain and appreciate the splendid views of Huangshan Mountains. (by Huang Songhui)



New Scenic Spots on Huangshan Mountains

By Chan Yat Nin Article by Mickey Ching

Apart from traditional scenic areas, new scenic spots have been developed in recent years, thus enabling tourists to gain a glimpse of the panorama view of the mountain from different perspectives.

Xihai Grand Canyon

If you like to appreciate the scenery of the mountain from a brand new perspective, you, with adequate stamina, energy and imagination, may challenge Xihai (West Sea) Grand Canyon as your next tourist target.

Xihai Grand Canyon at Huangshan Mountains is located in the place connecting three scenic areas, i.e. Xihai, Songgu (Pine Valley) and Diaoqiao (Fishing Bridge). The canyon joins Buxian Bridge on the south and Songlin (Pine Forest) Peak on the north. Before setting off, some friends warned that I should be fully prepared for possible psychological impacts because, after visiting the Xihai Grand Canyon, tourists would feel as if they travelled Huangshan Mountains twice.

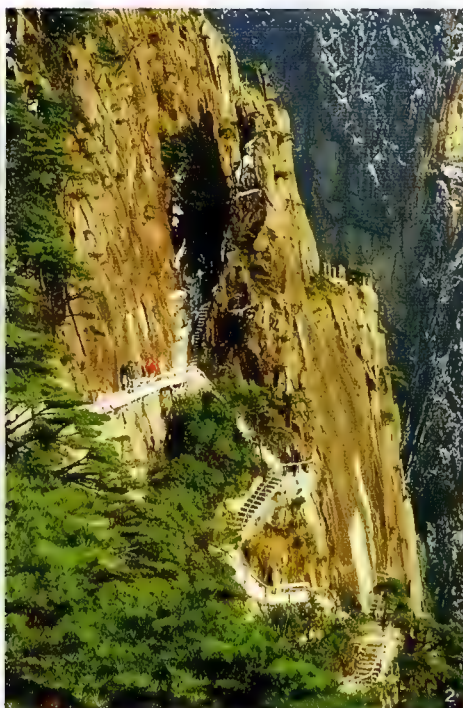
Nameless Grotesque Rocks and Pine Trees

Walking westward along the stone path of Paiyun Pavillion and around Songlin Peak, I soon entered this dreamland. The various peaks at Xihai were scattered around with diverse heights, including such famous peaks

as Shuangshun (Double Bamboo Shoots), Jiandao (Sharp Sword), Feilai, Paifang, and numerous nameless peaks. With curiosity, I craned to look into the stone steps, and got slightly frightened. The peaks here are mostly over 1,550 m high above the sea level; the relative height from top to bottom reach over 1,000 m, hence giving me the feeling of facing a bottomless gulf. The canyon area is prevalent with grotesque rock and pine trees of diverse shapes. Moreover, there are plenty of odd-shaped rock and pine trees that have yet to be named; so long as you exercise imagination, you can also see a wide variety of views.

Tourist Path of "Divine Workmanship"

The greatest feature of this scenic area is a tourist place for full appreciation of the canyon, as well as for looking up at Huangshan Mountain. Whatever you like, looking up, looking down, or looking straight forward, these artificial tourist paths enable you to appreciate the diverse peaks of Huangshan Mountains from multiple angles. It is no easy task to construct a footstep path at a height over 1,550 m above the sea level. The Tourist Path, in light of the unique





topography of Xihai Grand Canyon, was joined together as a whole by means of cantilevering, bridging and holing. In order to minimise the traces of artificiality, the rails of the footstep path was built with mimic mountain trees, tendrils and vines, and this, apart from bringing resemblance to the primitive mountain terrain, adds to the excitement in visiting the canyon.

Xihai Grand Canyon: A True Self-Service Trip

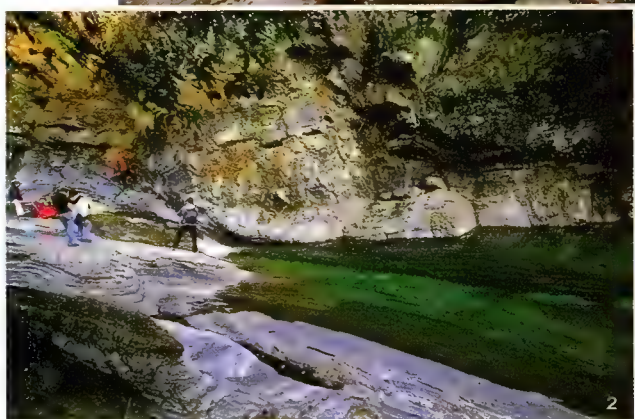
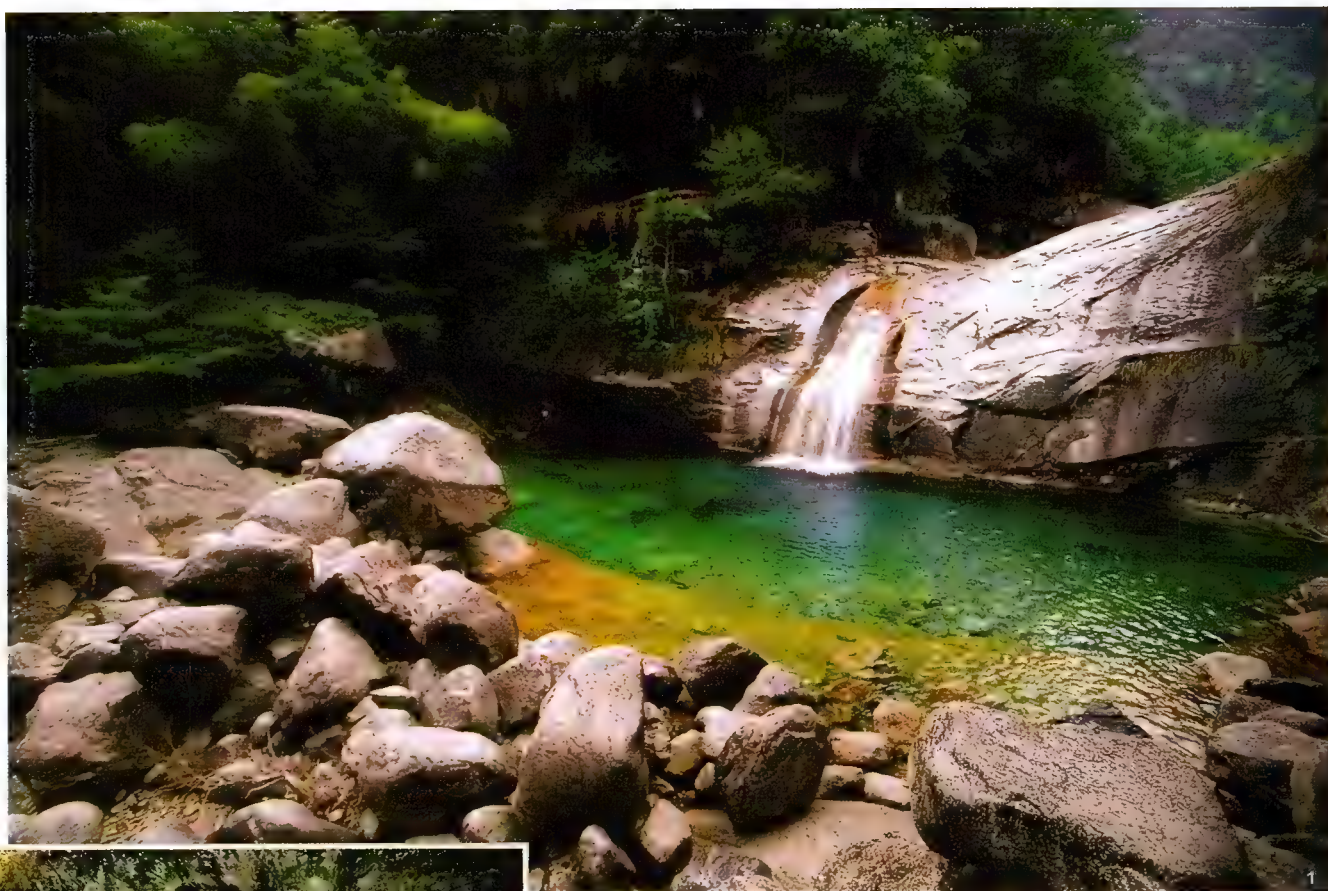
The deeper I went to the canyon bottom, the more fright I felt. Many tourist teams would generally go back along the circular path after visiting the first path gate, and seldom go reaching the canyon bottom. After inquiry, I knew that it would take about five to six hours to walk from the top to bottom. Considering the need to go back, it would take a lot of time indeed. If you plan to travel through Xihai Grand Canyon, you must keep in mind this message: you have to rely on yourself throughout the trip. Here, there are no people carrying any luggage for you, or carrying you in any sedan chairs. The concerned workers will take down your name, contact telephone and the number of travellers in your team, and when you go up from the circular path on the other side, such information will be registered again; all these are just security measures against accidents. In bad or snow weather, you should not walk there. The Tourist Path of Xihai Grand Canyon is

marked to be 15 km long, but you have to possess very good physical energy, for it is totally different from the normal flat road. When you travel to the canyon bottom and start losing your breath, you should get ready to go back from the bottom to the top, and that is the start of the test for your stamina and willpower. I set off at 8:30 A.M., reached the bottom at around 12 o'clock noon, and climbed back to the top after 2:00 P.M. Frankly, the bottom-to-top trip was sustained not by physical energy but by willpower; the whole process proved more arduous than had been imagined. However, if you're fully prepared beforehand, it will be perfectly worthwhile to take the trip!

Travel Tips

- There are no shops or restaurants in the scenic area; you have to prepare enough food.
- Never make your luggage too heavy, and there are no people serving you anyway.
- If you plan to travel throughout the Canyon, it is suggested that you stay at Huangshan Mountains for one night. You'd better not visit the Canyon together with other spots, for it will be exhaustive and time-consuming.

1. Buxian Bridge at Xihai Grand Canyon
2. The footstep path around the mountain adds to the excitement at the canyon.
3. Xihai peaks of diverse heights are scattered around.
4. Walking along the thrilling canyon tourist path



pools, and the biggest one is more than 30 m long. With the change of views and sunrays, the water in the pools varies in colour and image. Famous pools include Huajing (Flower Mirror), Luzhu

(Green Pearl), Yuhuan (Jade Ring), and Yuanyang (Mandarin Ducks).

Feicui (Emerald) Valley

As the filming site of the movie “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”, Feicui Valley is also a place of love. Many years ago, more than 30 youngsters travelled here and afterwards, 10 couples of them got married. Since then, the valley has had such aliases as “Love Valley” and “Lovers Valley”.

Six kilometres long, Feicui Valley is the largest valley in the east of Huangshan Mountain. The brook amid the valley, called Biyu Brook, originated in the such Huangshan Mountains peaks as Shixin, Tiannu (Celestial Maiden), and Shisun (Stone Bamboo Shoots). In the valley there are over one hundred colourful pools of diverse shapes and sizes. Among them, there are over 40 large

Travel Tips

- **Ticket:** ¥42 (high season), ¥32 (low season)
- **Traffic:** Feicui Valley is only six kilometres away from Huangshan Mountains scenic area. At the foot of Huangshan Mountain, it will take ¥60 (low season) and ¥100 (high season) to hire a vehicle to carry you to Feicui Valley.
- In winter, Feicui Valley pools are not too deep, and there are few tourists going there; hence the valley is particularly tranquil and pleasant. It will be romantic to travel there with your lover.

1. The wonderful changes of the water of the pools in Feicui Valley
2. The rock and water at Haibang (Sea Mussel) Beach
3. The classic beauty of Feicui Valley entrance

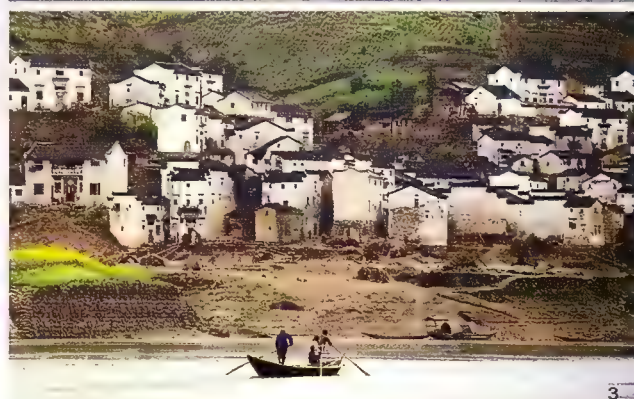
Taiping (Pacific) Lake

At Huangshan Mountains Shizi Peak there is a widely-known stone called "Monkey Observing the Sea"; yet in the absence of the sea of clouds, it is called "Monkey Observing Pacific Land". The "Pacific" here actually refers to Taiping County at the foot of the mountain. In the county lies the largest artificial lake of Anhui Province, Pacific Lake, which is filled with natural brook water from Huangshan Mountains and Jiuhua Mountain.

Pacific Lake, with an area of 88.6 km² and an average of 40 m in water depth, has water limpid all through the year; moreover, there are islands scattered amid the lake with many scenic spots on them.

Ba Gua (Eight Diagrams) Island

Located in the central part of Pacific Lake, Ba Gua Island is named after the Eight Diagrams Palace on it. On the island there are the eight diagrams as in the ancient Chinese classic, I Ching (The Book of Changes); these diagrams can be used for divination. If you are lucky, you may remember your diagram pattern and the island master will explain the meaning of your diagram; surely it will be up to you to believe the explanation or not. Anyway, the tranquil environment is sure to enable you to feel as if you were in a land out of this world.



Taiping (Pacific) Bay

Taiping Bay is a scenic area with a karst terrain. Scenic spots here include Yanya Stone Forest, Yaolong Cave, Yueya Bay and more. Among them, Yanya Stone Forest, Yixiantian views, and Yaolong Cave with stalactite are all wonderful places for travel.

Travel Tips

- **Ticket:** ¥52 (high season), ¥35 (low season)
- **Traffic in the Scenic Area:** Starting from Tunxi, you can, at the bus station, take buses to Taiping County, and then change buses to Pacific Lake; that takes around 20 minutes. Apart from the ticket for the scenic area, you have to take a tourist boat. The boats include a large-scale tourist boat, a classic style boat, and seven yachts. The fare is ¥25 per ticket for the large-scale or the classic boat, and ¥260 per yacht for the seven seats. Note that in low seasons, the large-scale and classic boat service will be suspended, and only yachts will be available. In addition, the trip to Taiping Bay calls for independent payment.
- Winter may not be the ideal season for the lake trip, as the water level is not high enough.
- It takes around two hours to tour the whole island on a yacht.
- There are restaurants in the scenic area.



Monkey Island

Made up of two islets and blessed with humid air and sufficient sunshine, Monkey Island is a wonderful habitat for monkeys. There are dozens of Huangshan Mountains short-tailed

monkeys living here, the king of which is now 10 years old. Here you can closely observe these lively monkeys, take pictures and feed them with food prepared by the island workers. You should, however, be mentally ready, because on hearing the workers open the boxes, those clever monkeys will know it is time for to have dinner, and will come before you in swarms.

Longzhai (Dragon Village) Island

For better understanding of the ancient pottery culture, Longzhai Island is a spot not to be missed. There are relics of the Gulong Pottery Cave over 400 years ago, the Temple of the Supreme Taoist Master, and the Exhibition Hall of the Pacific Lake Ancient Pottery Culture. Furthermore, there are pottery workshops, and by paying ¥5, you can make your own pottery.

1. When short-tailed monkeys take food, it is quite a spectacle (by Mickey Ching).
2. It is romantic to tour Pacific Lake in the mist.
3. The buildings with pink walls and green tiles on the banks add to the lake's beauty.

The Best Spots for Photography

Photos & Article by Chan Yat Nin

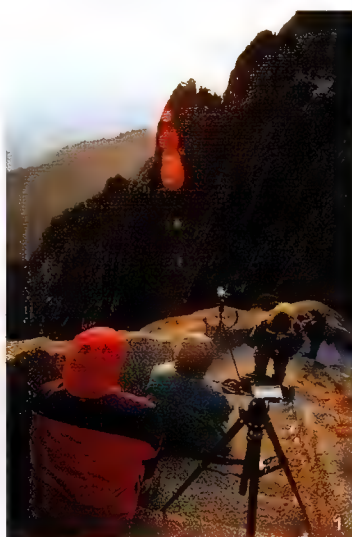
It is known that beautiful views are everywhere on Huangshan Mountain. For photographers, however, a heart-touching picture consists of several conditions: striking, steep peaks with changes in heights and distribution; views of short, intermediate, and long distances with rich content and clear difference in status; wonderful collocation of peculiar peaks, grotesque stones and strong pine trees; and surely, along with the backgrounding effects of fanciful weather like clouds, rays of twilight sunshine, ice and snow, and fog.

Although depending on luck for sunshine, clouds, ice and snow, the choice of the sites for photo shooting can be controlled. If you travel to Huangshan Mountains for times, you will know from what scenic spot a shockingly beautiful picture was taken, and gradually understand where to find luck in different weather.

Beihai (North Sea) Scenic Area

Beihai is the area with the greatest density of scenic spots, as well as the perfect place for observing the sunrise and sea of clouds in the morning. Starting from Qingliang Platform at the cliff to the front left of Beihai Hotel's major gate, if you climb the mountain along the left road up to Shizi Peak, you will see five to six view-observing platforms escalating in heights above the sea level; all of them are good spots for observing the sunrise. As far as photography is concerned, the higher the place is, the better. The best spot should be the cliff near the top of Shizi Peak. Each of these view-observing platforms is large enough for three to four persons to take photographs with supporting instruments; therefore, it is necessary to arrive early to occupy the advantageous position, and people arriving late may have to explore new places outside the platform rails. Beihai Hotel and Shilin Hotel are 10 to 20 minutes walk away from all those platforms. Shizi Peak had been closed for conservation for many years until last year, so only a small number of people know this perfect photo shooting place (See Photo 3 on P.24-25). Furthermore, it is not easy to climb onto Shizi Peak, and hence few people have been there.

East of Beihai stands Shixin Peak, a place where you can photograph the sunrise in the east and Beihai peaks in the west; unluckily, it was closed for conservation last year. In the zone under the peak, however, there are many



high, strong, grotesque pine trees, such as Heihu Pines and Shuqin Pines. In weather of snow and cold fog, it is possible to photograph spectacular snow views and ice blooms (See Photo 1 on P.26).

Walk around 10 minutes along the mountain path near Shixin Peak, and you will reach Guanyin (Bodhisattva) Peak, near which there is a view-observing platform as another place to photograph sunrise and clouds.

Xihai Scenic Area

The most wonderful view here for cameras may be Xihai Grand Canyon and peaks at sunset.

First, Paiyun Pavilion near the cliff at the canyon top should not be missed. Here you will feel interested in photographing peculiar rock amid the rolling clouds in Western Sea. Danxia Peak behind Paiyun Pavilion is a very good photo shooting spot; at the peak top you can put Jiulong (Nine Dragons) Peak in the west into your camera lens. In the presence of cloud seas, the peaks look like dragons flying over the ocean, constituting a spectacular view. The path to Danxia Peak is usually covered with hard ice, and you must be exceptionally careful.

Walk up from Paiyun Pavilion on the steep steps along the left bank of Xihai Grand Canyon, and half an hour later you will reach Feilai Rock. Feilai Rock is relatively high, and its cliff is the best place to photograph Xihai, as the sunset and the cloud sea are particularly splendid (See Photo 2 on P.28-29). If you like to photograph Feilai Rock itself, it is better to do this in a place away from it.

Guangming Peak

As the central zone of Huangshan Mountains scenic area, Guangming Peak is where the front mountain joins



the back mountain. Due to high position, wide scope of vision, magnificence of views, there are few small-scale but many large-scale spectacles. As experienced photographers know it, in weather of dense fog, you should walk up to higher and wider places, and then you may capture chances of shooting pictures at the intervals of the fog converging and dispersing. At that time, Guangming Peak is a good choice. At this peak, you will observe Xihai on the northwest, see Feilai Peak floating like a sail in the ocean (Photo 2 on P.31), and see Lianhua, Tiandu, Yuping peaks standing with grandeur and magnificence in the distant southeast.

If you lodge in the observatory reception house on Guangming Peak where there are some rooms facing east, then you do not have to go outdoors to shoot sun-rise (See Picture 2 on P.32-33).

Lianhua Peak

Lianhua Peak, the summit of Huangshan Mountain, has a path of stone steps, and along the path you can set off at the Tianhai (Sky Sea) and go up the mountain, across the peak top, and down to Yuping Peak. At the top of the peak, there is nothing to hinder your vision but two view-observing platforms and a turning corner of stone steps, which can hold seven to eight tripods for photography, and they are all good places to shoot pictures of Tiandu Peak and Yuping Peak (see P.17) at sunrise or sunset. However, as the summit is very windy, and the path down to Yuping is dangerously steep, the path will be usually closed in icy and windy weather to prevent tourists from climbing the mountain.

Tiandu Peak

Located between the two high peaks, i.e. Lotus and Tiandu, Yuping Peak is relatively low, and hence it is not the good spot for shooting pictures. Yet if you live in Yuping Mansion (Yupinglou) Hotel, in the morning you can walk 15 minutes along Yuping Peak path halfway up to Lianhua Peak, look back then, and you will find a picture of sunset with Tiandu and Yuping Mansion as foreground. There it is possible to set up over twenty tripods along the steps.

Going from Yuping Mansion down to Tiandu, in weather of fog, you can catch the view "Three Islands in Penglai, Fabled Land of Immortals". Go up to Tiandu Peak and look back, you will find Yuping and Lianhua peaks. If there happens to be a sea of clouds, Yuping Peak will appear extraordinarily splendid with the Lianhua Peak as the background. Tiandu path is extremely dangerous, so it has been closed for many years and only very few photographers were granted permission to climb it for photographs. It is said that the peak will be opened again, and then it will be a paradise for photographers.

1. Photographers were observing the sunrise halfway up Lianhua Peak; in front of them stood Yuping Mansion.
2. Shizi Peak is the best spot to photograph the sunrise at the Beihai; beneath it on the right is "Monkey Observing the Sea".
3. Yuping Peak path observed halfway up the Lianhua Peak
4. The view-observing platforms at the top of Lianhua Peak, and the path of stone steps under it; they are good places to photograph Tiandu and Yuping peaks.
5. The sunrise view observed halfway up Lianhua Peak



All Life on the Shoulder

Huangshan Mountains Porter

Photos & Article by Chan Yat Nin

On the road of Huangshan Mountains, there are three types of people most commonly seen: guards in uniform, who are catching those smoking in the non-smoking areas as well as patrolling; cleaners in yellow waistcoats, who are keeping every corner of the great Huangshan Mountains clean by clearing away the smallest plastic bags even if it is on the edge of a cliff; and last but not least, porters who are the closest to the tourists and carry all the necessities to the mountain top.

I, as a photographer, go to Huangshan often and each time I am fully armed, busy with shooting from day to night. Therefore I meet porters everyday—in a way they are my benefactors.

Usually my luggage weighs 70 lb and I hire a porter at the foot of the mountain. I have many friends in Huangshan Mountains ranging from photographers, management personnel, security personnel, tourist guides, to taxi drivers and porters. Prior to my arrival each time, I make an appointment with the relevant person so that a full service arrangement is in place: a taxi driver picks me up from the airport and drives me to the cable car station

of Huangshan; a porter carries my luggage to the mountain top; and I, will sit in a cable car and rise up to the mountain. After checking in at a hotel, I would tell the porters when to meet tomorrow morning and they would always wait for me a little ahead of that time in front of the hotel. They are never late nor do they ever break the appointment.

The domains of operation for Sedan Team are designated in Huangshan, e.g., with Guangming Peak and Tianhai Basin as the boundary, those who hold the front-mountain working certificate can only operate in the front mountain and those who hold the back-mountain

working certificate cannot go over Haixin Pavilion. So you have to pay twice, supposing you want to go to Yuping Pavilion from Beihai. I know many porters working in the back mountain where the system of fee charge is well managed. But it's difficult to hire them from the beginning to the end.

Porters from the Sedan Team are pleased to help their customers out of dangerous situations besides serving as tourist guide as well as porter. Once I was busy preparing to shoot the sunrise in Beihai when both my tripod and camera dropped down the cliff. Porter Xiao Li took a great risk using a special rope and recovered my things. I am very thankful to him.

Porters of Different Fates

The porters in Huangshan Mountains are originally farmers. The development in Huangshan Mountains area in recent years has provided them with another way of making a living. At the very beginning, individual porter and tourist guide solicited business on their own, resulting in chaos in the market. Later on, the issuing of porter and sedan chair man license was adopted by the Huangshan Mountains authority. Sedan Team was established under the Service Company. This way porters and sedan chair



men could not work until they had applied for the license and paid the management fee. The team leader arranges work for the porters by weighing the client's luggage and negotiating about the charges.

However, it is never easy to be a licensed porter because of the expensive management fee paid. Therefore there are unlicensed porters who are doing their business secretly and offer a lower price to the tourists, e.g., ¥200 or 300 for one day. But there is always a risk for them. They have to hide themselves from the management people or they may ask their clients to carry their luggage on their own when the managers appear. At other times, they have to taste the angry fists of those licensed porters who are upset by this undercutting dealing.

Fortunately, some porters worked hard and got the tourist guide license after some examinations; some became drivers and businessmen; moreover, some porters who worked exclusively for photographers, found themselves falling in love with photography and became well-known Huangshan photographers.

Quite a few of those who don't have a porter's license are making their living carrying commodities. You can always see porters plodding up the steep stone steps with heavy loads on their shoulders. They carry boxes of wine, jars of cooking oil, bundles of vegetables and even construction materials such as big pieces of glass and wood. At first I was confused. Why do they use manpower instead of the cable car? Later I found the reason. It only costs ¥50 to hire a porter for six hours of labour; however, the ticket for a cable car is ¥55 (in low season) to ¥81 (in high season). Besides, a porter is still needed after the cable car.



2

1. All the things we are enjoying depends on the hard works of the porters.
2. The sedan services are expensive; nevertheless, they are helping many elders to realise their dream of travelling on Huangshan mountains.
3. All the construction materials are carried to the mountain by cheap manpower instead of the cable car.

Ancient Villages of Anhui

Photos by Chan Yat Nin and Huang Songhui

Article by Mickey Ching



Walking through Hong Village

Hong Village has known as a place taken out of a traditional Chinese painting, but I came to comprehend it through the photos and films. Later, one day's living in Hong Village brought me to the real world other than imagination.

Early in the years of Southern Song Dynasty, local forefathers built this village into the "ox" form as per bionics, taking the hill as the head, trees as the horns, bridges as the legs, rooms as the body, lake as the stomach and spring as the intestine. The



intestine running through the stomach of the whole village is very important for local people: supplying water, preventing fire, regulating temperature and keeping humidity. The buildings of Anhui style thinks much of geomantic quality under the implied meaning "never leading the nutritive water to the field of others".

A Story of the Moon Pool

Sitting by the Yuetang (Moon) Pool, one cannot help but intrigue by the legend behind the place. It is said that Hu Chongnian was married in the village, and she worried that the village was not prosperous. Therefore, she invited a geomancer to make site investigation, rebuilding a natural spring into the moon pool and digging the "ox stomach", which formed the rudiment of the current "ox" pattern. I didn't know if there did exist such a story in real life, but I asserted she might be a forthright woman at that time.

Anyway, it has been an old story. Today, I met more well-equipped cameramen, touring parties and students sketching by the pool. They caught the dreaming pool scenes with their eyes, feet and hands. Local villagers are accustomed to their behaviors and have lived their own lives as usual, washing clothes and vegetables by the pool.

The Silent and Dark Night

I understood the nightlife of Hong Village when staying

in the small hotel behind the Yuetang Pool. It was before 6:30 P.M. Local buildings are equipped with only one small window, so you can never see the twinkling lights. The old men taking the sun in the morning were sitting by the brazier at home. Who would be as thickheaded as me to take a view at such a cold night? Finally, a street lamp was lighted and several grey shabby buildings ran to my eyes, but there was no person on the street. There were no loudspeakers of the touring parties and no colourful night life, except me in the hotel. Even the greeting lanterns were hung lonely at a corner, extinguished, as if were afraid to disturb the serene night. I found a quilt in the room and lent a coat from the hostess willfully. Sitting in front of the door and watching the twinkling night, I experienced an unprecedented night life.

Travel Tips

Location: 10 km northwest to Yi County, Anhui Province

Background: Hong Village is the gathering place of Wang's families, originally built in the Southern Song Dynasty. It initiates the design of "ox-form" village and water system, and is reputed as "the village in traditional Chinese painting" by the artists. In 2000, it was listed as the world cultural heritage at the same time with Xidi.

Ticket: ¥55 (high season); ¥44 (low season)

Lodging: Yuetang Hotel

Address: 18 Hongcun Back street

Tel: (0559) 554 1083

Main Attractions: South Lake Academy, Chengzhi Hall, etc.

Traffic: taking a bus to Yi County at Tunxi Bus Station (¥12) and then taking a bus to Hong Village in Yi County (¥2).

1. Missing the delicious sesame seed cake and the beautiful scenes at Hong Village (by Mickey Ching)
2. The unforgettable South Lake of Hong Village (by Huang Songhui)
3. Drying the ham (by Chan Yat Nin)



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3



The Pulse of Xidi

The rolling hills added more colour to my imagination towards the primitive village when the bus passed through the wide avenue into the serpent hill roads. I was told that Yi County was the prototype of the prose “A Record of Arcadia by Tao Yuanming”, but the arcadia world has experienced many changes by now.

I was most impressed with the memorial archway standing at the entrance to Xidi. I had taken the memorial archway as the “patent” of women in the past. Indeed, it might also be founded to honour the dutiful sons and merited officials so long as an approval was obtained from the government beforehand.

This memorial archway was built in the Ming Dynasty to commend Hu Wenguang’s achievements for more than 30 years of political life. The archway is built with local black marble of high quality and has experienced a baptism of more than 400 years. It is said that there had been 13 memorial archways in the village, but only this

one survives and stands here lonely today. When the people passing under the archway, they will call up the glory of the ancestors.

Families in Arcadia

There are preserved more than 100 ancient buildings of the Ming and Qing dynasties in Xidi. Each door is incorporated with shoe-shaped door casing on which are carved exquisite flowers, birds, insects, fish or figures. But most of them were destroyed. Next to Paocai Building is Western Gardern incorporated with the dooryard, mid-



yard and backyard. You may see the faint sceneries in yard through the leaking windows, flowers, rearing pond and miniascape. Western Garden had been famous for its ethereal atmosphere, but the tourists disturbed the past serenity.

The local people have attached importance to reading for ages. Lvfu Hall had ever accommodated such a literary family. The host Hu Jitang was addicted to books, poems and paintings, but he never set foot in the official field. In his mind, learning was most important in life as his couplets describe "the family accumulating merits for ages is the family who likes reading the most".

The Transforming Xidi

Leaving Lvfu Hall, I saw a guidepost standing by the

road. I had heard that there was a highest building in Xidi, so was it. Paying the host an entrance fee of ¥2, I stepped into the house and found it had become a private hotel with an outer ancient appearance and modern furnishing. Walking to the heaven roof and getting a bird-eye view, I wondered how much tradition was preserved in such old buildings? Is there Arcadia in the world? I wondered.

Travel Tip

Location: 8 km east to Yi County

Background: Xidi is the gathering place of Hu's families, originally built in the years of Northern Song Dynasty. The whole village appears a boat-shape and is reputed as "the families in Arcadia". There are preserved more than 100 ancient buildings of the Ming and Qing dynasties. A garret named "The Family in Arcadia" was built for morality cultivation beside Dafu Residence, the mansion of Hu Wenzhao. In 2000, it was listed as the world cultural heritage at the same time with Hong Village.

Ticket: ¥55 (high season); ¥44 (low season)

Main Attractions: Hu Wenguang's Archway, Zouma Building, Western Garden, Jing Ai Hall, etc.

Accommodation: Xidi Restaurant and Wangyue Building

Traffic: taking a bus to Yi County in Tunxi and taking a bus to the destination at Xidi Crossing.

1. To appreciate the panorama of Xidi, you have to pay ¥2. (by Chan Yat Nin)
2. Hu Wenguang's Archway reminds people of their ancestral glory. (by Mickey Ching)
3. The villagers live a new life today. (by Mickey Ching)
4. The panorama view of Xidi (by Chan Yat Nin)



There are many other primitive villages besides Hong Village and Xidi in Anhui; they are unknown to public due to inconvenient traffic and poor development.



Guanlu

Nearby Nanping Village famous for its ancestral temple group, there is a wonderful Siamese village named Guanlu Village. It is a gathering place of Wang's families. Beside the village is an ancient plank road named Guanlu, which was a trunk link leading to Jiangxi and Hubei in ancient times. Guanlu is located at the foot of Wuting Mountain and Xiwu Mountain.

You should have a look at the Eight Large Families Building while visiting Guanlu Village. It is a luxurious residence building by the eight brothers of Wang with uniform architectural style outside and separating doors inside. It is said that the residence extended through the whole village in ancient times.

Among the eight brothers, the forth brother was most rich and he built the Shuigui Study. The eldest brother was the most merciful and he built his home into a school for the children.

Besides the Eight Large Families Building, there is a dried bean curd bar (handed down from the ancestors) and Guanlu Elementary School. At present, Guanlu Village accommodates the families with surname other than Wang and only some of the Eight Large Families are open for sightseeing. Moreover, the materials on Guanlu are poor in quantity, so you'd better visit the village under the guide of local people.

Travel Tips

Location: located in Xiwu Village, 8 km southwest to Yi County and 2 km west to Nanping Village.

Background: Wang's families are reckoned to move to Guanlu in the end of the Tang Dynasty. But its current scale and architectural style were formed in the years of Qianlong's Reign of the Qing Dynasty. Guanlu Village is well known for its eight-household residence, so it is reputed as "the wonderful neighbouring villages".

Ticket: ¥26 (high season); ¥20 (low season)

Accommodation: there is no hotel at present.

Traffic: taking the regular bus to Yi County in Tunxi (about ¥12) and then taking the regular bus to Guanlu (¥2~3).

1. The households of the eight brothers are connected together. It is said they extended through the village. (by Zhou Bing)
2. The sole dried bean curd bar handed down from the ancestors in the village. (by Mickey Ching)



Tang Mo

Tang Mo Village is located at a place surrounded by several mountains and Tungan Stream passes through the village. It is famous for the Huizhou Water Mouth Garden. People in Huizhou lay stress on geomantic omen. "Water Mouth" is the portal and soul of the village, which has a bearing upon a family's thriving and fortune of the village. Besides the selection for water mouth, there must be tall trees and pavilions to interwork. The old tree standing at the entrance to Tang Mo Village, octagonal ancient pavilion, foot bridge, Fellowmen Imperial Academy memorial archway, and the Xiaozhi (filial son) Lake that modelled Hangzhou West Lake for architecture together form the distinct garden landscape of Tang Mo. The Tang Mo Water Street close to Gaoyang Bridge is the pith and marrow of the whole Tang Mo Village.

At both the sides of the Water Street there are tea inns and farmhouse restaurants. At specific time, there are also featured folk-custom shows such as fisherman playing with mussel, jumping mammon and jumping Zhong Kui, which let you taste the local customs of Tang Mo.



Travel Tips

Location: Qiankou Town, Huizhou District, Anhui Province.

Background: Tang Mo was built initially in Tang Dynasty and became prosperous in Ming and Qing dynasties. Four memorial temples and more than one hundred folk houses of Qing Dynasty have been reserved. In 923 A.D., Wang Sili, the descendant of Wang Hua, who was the duke of Yue state in Tang Dynasty, was ordered by his father to

marry Cheng, who was living here and moved and settled down in this village. The design of water mouth of Tang Mo Village is the representation of water mouth garden of Wannan ancient village and the interwork of Water Street and ancient folk house architecture also brings the charm like Jiangnan water country to Tang Mo.

Ticket: ¥38

Accommodation: Besides the restaurants at both the sides of Water Street, there are also other farmhouse restaurants inside the village for your selection. All dishes are cooked and planted by the villagers themselves.

Traffic: You can take a bus from Tunxi to Huizhou District town, which costs about ¥4; then change to take a bus to Tang Mo, which costs about ¥4.

1. Water Street is the pith and marrow of Tang Mo, which brims over with customs and practices of water country (by Mickey Ching)

Cheng Kan

Hui-style architecture stresses on geomantic omen layout and Cheng Kan is the top of them. Cheng Kan has reserved the best architecture of Ming Dynasty. The whole village was built according to the Eight Diagrams theory of "unification of Yin (Kan) qi and Yang (Cheng) qi and unification of nature and man" in the Book of Changes. The year when Luo brothers who were well versed in geomantic omen sought sanctuary here, they noticed that this place was surrounded by mountains in four sides and surrounded by water in three sides, and a

one-square-kilometre depression was in the middle. The whole village seemed as if being located in a treasure bowl. So they thought it was an ideal geomantic land and they moved and settled down here. The front, middle and back street in the village are parallel and connected to 99 short lanes.

There are many sight spots worth visiting in the village, including Dongshu Ancestral Temple. Baolun Pavilion is the pith and marrow of the ancestral temple. The Luo family clan put such articles as imperial edict and official order here. The sculptures and coloured drawings in

the Baolun Pavilion that imitated Roman and Persian style are exquisite beyond compare. They are rare in the country and have been reserved in good condition after having undergone more than four hundred years. An ancestral temple for women, the first one in China. Besides, Zhongying Street and Huanxiu Bridge inside the village are also worth visiting.



Travel Tips

Location: between the upstream of Xinanjiang River and Huangshan Mountain, north of Huizhou District, Anhui.

Background: Cheng Kan was built about 1,800 years ago. Cheng Kan is a mystic Eight Diagrams village in Wana that is full of connotation of Huizhou geomantic omen culture.

Admission ticket: ¥35

Accommodation: There are restaurants at the entrance of Cheng Kan village, but there is no folk house for accommodation at this moment.

Traffic: You can take a bus from Tunxi to Huizhou District town, which costs about ¥4; then change to take a bus to Cheng Kan, which is not frequent and costs about ¥4.

1. There are lucarnes built in most of the houses in ancient village. When it rains, the rain will drop into a pool, which implies that "rich water should be kept for one's own sake". (by Mickey Ching)
2. Sculptures and coloured drawings in Baolun Pavilion in Cheng Kan are beautiful. (by Mickey Ching)



Peripheral Attractions

Photos provided by China Tourism Photo Library

Article by Mickey Ching



Tunxi Ancient Street

Tunxi Ancient Street, located in Tunxi downtown, was a small fishing village during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). At the end of the Yuan Dynasty and at beginning of the Ming Dynasty, Cheng Weizong, a merchant from the Anhui Province, invested in building 47 shops, and, other than four of them for his own use, the rest were used for storing up goods to attract other businessmen. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the place had evolved into a goods terminal centre in Huizhou, and, during the period of 1644-1662, it was a two-kilometre Square Town in Southern Anhui. After several destructions by fire and reconstructions, it still

keeps the architectural style of the Song Dynasty and the street look like from the Ming and Qing dynasties. The street is crowded with tea houses, wineshops, book villages and ink shops. On the street itself, there is a memorial archway on the east inlet, and an arcade on the west inlet, allowing the old street to show off a more unique style.

The old street, 1,273 m in length and five to eight metres wide, is covered with brown strip stones, having row upon row of shops and elegant architectures.

The old street integrates shops, workshops and residences. It reserves the operating pattern and has shops in the front and workshops or residences in the back. The buildings are only two stories high, and are composed of the wood-through-tenon structures. Its horse-head shape walls, blue roofing tiles, Hui-style wood sculptures, gold-lettered signboards and red double-eaves show elegance and nobleness.

Along the street, there are tens of shops, among which Tongderen is a pharmacy

featuring traditional Chinese medicine that opened during the period of 1851-1862. It is over 120 years old now.

The popular tea of Qihong and Tunlu are mostly distributed in Tunxi. After elaborate processing, Tunlu gives out strong fragrance, and is called Golden Green, enjoying good reputation at home and abroad.

Everywhere, you can see the beautiful Hui ink, She inkstone, Four Sculptures in Huizhou (brick, wood, stone and bamboo products), Hui-style traditional Chinese paintings, prints, rubbings, inscriptions, Bonsai and root sculptures. In addition, there are mushrooms, agarics, Chinese torrey, cathay hickory, loquat, chukars and other local products which can be seen anywhere for the visitors' choice.

The old street of the Ancient Huizhou can be rated as an art gallery of excellent folk cultures and traditions.



The Four Treasures of the Study

Since the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the ancient Huizhou became the important beginning of the four treasures of the study. Representatives of these are the Hui ink, She inkstone, Cheng paper and Wang Chinese brush, well known around the world. Starting from the Tang Dynasty, the Hui ink is featured in deep black. The She inkstone, one of the four famous inkstones in China, has a hard texture, and does not dry up when holding water. It is elaborately carved and possesses natural veins. Cheng paper is called the king of papers, and ancient people even stated that it is "as hard and white as jade, thin and bright". The Wang Chinese brush, first fabricated by Wang Boli, a personage of Shexian County of the Song Dynasty, is also called the Hui Chinese brush, which is characterised by "being sharply pointed, uniform, round and steady".



1. The Tunxi Ancient Street was once a small fishing village.
2. The buildings here integrate shops and residences.
3. Four Treasures of the Study: Hui ink, She inkstone, Cheng paper and Wang Chinese brush

Tangyue Archway Complex



The amazing Tangyue Archway Complex has a long history of several hundred years.

The Tangyue Archway Complex is located in the Shexian County, Huangshan City, about five kilometres from the county town.

The Tangyue Archway Complex was established by Bao Clan of the Tangyue Village through the Ming and Qing dynasties. Here "Tang" means "Tangli Tree" and "yue" means the shady place under the tree. "Tangyue" indicates the place under the shady Tangli tree, and the

name of the village derived from that meaning. This is an ancient village, and has a history of over eight hundred years from the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The Bao Clan in this village is a family who centres on "filial piety", strictly following the feudal ethical code and advocating Confucian ethics. Since the Song Dynasty, many dutiful sons and chaste wives have come up in the family. Stories about filial piety and loyalty are very

outstanding. Meanwhile, this family is a prosperous household with respect to region and culture, well known for its many rich merchants. This brilliant family created outstanding archways. The archways are arranged in the order of “Loyalty, Piety, Moral and Justice”, and out of these, three were built during the Ming Dynasty and four in the Qing Dynasty. The seven archways in the village are “Bao Can Xiao Xing Fang”, “Ci Xiao Li Fang”, “Jie Xiao Fang of Ms. Wang”, “Wife of Bao Wenling”, “Le Xiang Hao She Fang”, “Jie Xiao Fang of Ms. Wu”, “Step-wife of Bao Wenyuan”, “Xiao Zi Fang of Bao Fengchang” and “Shang Shu Fang of Bao Xiang Xian”.

One of them is an archway of the Ming Dynasty, which was built by the emperor to praise both of father and son, named Bao Shousun. According to the historical record, the Shexian defending troops, the Li Da's soldiers became traitors, so they robbed people, including all of the rich men. Bao Shousun and his son were arrested by the traitors, and they decided they must kill one of them, the father or the son. At this dangerous time, both of them fought to take the bullet. Their action was extremely moving and even the traitors could not bear to kill them. To honour their virtue, a court ordered the archway to be built. The emperor at that time wrote a pair of couplet on the scrolls in remembrance and hung them in front of the hall.

As it is said, at that time, Tangyue had the “Zhong (loyalty)”, “Xiao (piety)” and “Jie” (moral) archways, but no “Yi” (justice) archway. An official who was in charge of all the salt affairs donated an enormous amount of money to his constituency. Therefore, the emperor granted him to build this “Yi” archway, with the name “Hao Shan Shi Le”.

The Tangyue Archway Complex is magnificent and splendid, rarely seen anywhere else in the country, and was listed as a key relic under a protection law by the province in September 1981.

On the side of the archways there are two ancient clan halls — one for men, called the “Dun Ben Tang”, and the



other for women, called the “Qing Yi Tang”, which means the hall of role models. Both halls provide vivid statues for the tourists to understand the life and work style of the local merchants' families in the patriarchal-feudal system evolved in the Huizhou area. In addition, the construction of a women's hall was a rare symbol of women's victory over feudal routine, since women used to be forbidden to enter the clan hall.

The Bao's Family Garden

The Bao's Family Garden, located next to the Tangyue Archway Complex, is a private garden for Bao Qiyun, the famous Hui merchant and senior official of Qing Dynasty. The Bao's Family Garden, the Zhuozheng Garden in Suzhou and the Li Garden in Wuxi are together called the three largest private gardens in the south of the lower reaches of Yangtze River. The Bao's Family Garden occupies an area of more than 360 m². Taking the Hui-style bonsai as the subject, the garden includes nearly ten thousands bonsai and integrates booths, pavilions and streams. The Bao's Family Garden, together with the archway complex, constitutes a complete Hui merchant native place. It is currently the largest private garden in China.

1. The harmonious village

2. The archways are arranged in the order of “Loyalty, Piety, Moral and Justice”.



Xuguo Stone Archway

The Xuguo Stone Archway, another name for the Great Scholar Archway, usually called the "Eight-feet Archway". It was built in 1584 in honour of Xu Guo, minister of the Board of Rites and great scholar of Wuyingdian. The stone archway is 11.5 m long from south to north, seven metres wide from east to west and 11.5 m high. It is covered with elaborate carvings and masterpieces of stone sculpture techniques. The Xuguo Stone Archway has become a national treasure and is called the Oriental Triumphal Arch. In 1988, it was listed as the key cultural relic under State protection.

The Xuguo Stone Archway is an architecture of imitation wood-style construction. All the stone materials are superb, and each weighing four to five tons. Every stone pillar, beam archway, stele and corbel arch is elaborately carved. There are 12 lions, four at the front and back, and two on the left and right respectively, that stand on the stone foundation, showing different vivid shapes. These "individualised" sculpture designs cleverly express the ideology and social achievements of Xu Guo, the



owner of the archway.

The inside and outside of the archway, in all directions, are engraved with elaborate drawings. The "Flying Huge Dragon" carved on the south side symbolises the emperor at the south as a king, expressing Xu Guo's and his loyalty to the court. The many calligraphies and engravings in the building tell people that Xu Guo received regular professional training, and became the most important official of the country by means of his ability and wisdom.

Huiyuan Garden

Located near Xuguo Stone Archway, the Huiyuan Garden occupies an area of two hectares, with a building space of 18,000 m². Major architectures are the Renhe Building, the Deyue Building, the Huifeng Stone Archway, the No. 1 Building of Huiyuan Garden, the Arcade, the Guxi Building and so on. The entire Huiyuan Garden integrates the three greatest ancient architectures in Huizhou, namely, the memorial archways, civil residences and ancestral halls, containing elites of brick carving, wood carving and stone carving.

1. Also known as the Oriental Triumphal Arch, the Xuguo Stone Archway has become a national treasure.
2. The old teahouse is also one of the main attractions.



Doushan Street

Located in the Shexian County, the Doushan Street is a cultural scenic point integrating ancient civil residences, streets, carvings, wells and archways. Here you can see the Doushan ancient street built during the Ming and Qing dynasties, several residences of Hui merchants, the Wangshi's civil residence, the Yangjia's

courtyard, the Xushi's courtyard and the Panjia's courtyard, representative works of wood carvings and stone carving of the Hui style, etc. Just like a long historical picture scroll, the Doushan Street is given the name of the first street in the south of the lower reaches of Yangtze River.



The tranquil Yuliangba Dam at dusk

Yuliangba Dam

Yuliangba Dam, the largest water control project of the ancient Shexian County, is situated three kilometers away from the town. As early as the Tang Dynasty (618), a stone dam had been built. The present dam was rebuilt in the Ming Dynasty. The Yuliangba Dam could store up water from upper reaches and slow down the water into the lower reaches, playing a role in irrigation, sailing and anti-flood. The dam is 138 m long, 27 m wide at the bottom, four metres at the top, and made of hard stones. The method of building is very scientific and skillful, and one stone pillar was inserted after ten cyan stones were laid, with hard stone blocks nailed between the upper and lower layers. By doing so, the layers were connected as if they were locked with stone locks. In each layer, the strip stones were interlocked up and down as well as from left to right,

forming the solid Yuliangba Dam across the river. There was a floodgate available for draining water. According to some famous experts of ancient buildings in the country, the Yuliangba Dam was so well designed and constructed that it can match the Dujiangyan Irrigation System in Chengdu. Standing on the dam, you can have a good view of wonderful sceneries.

The Ziyang Bridge was built during the Ming Dynasty, it is 140 m long, 14 m high and 10 m wide. Among the three ancient bridges in Shexian Town, this bridge is the highest and widest. The upper reaches are the dock used for Hui merchants' sailing, so the bridge holes were built much larger than those of common bridges for the purpose of sailing.

The Shexian County has applied for listing Yuliangba Dam as a world cultural heritage.

Huashan Miku Grottoes

The Huashan Miku Grottoes, located in the east suburb of Tunxi, the Huangshan City, is the site of the rock caves in ancient Huizhou. Its magnificent scale, splendid vigour, intensive distribution and distinct characteristics are rarely seen in the country.

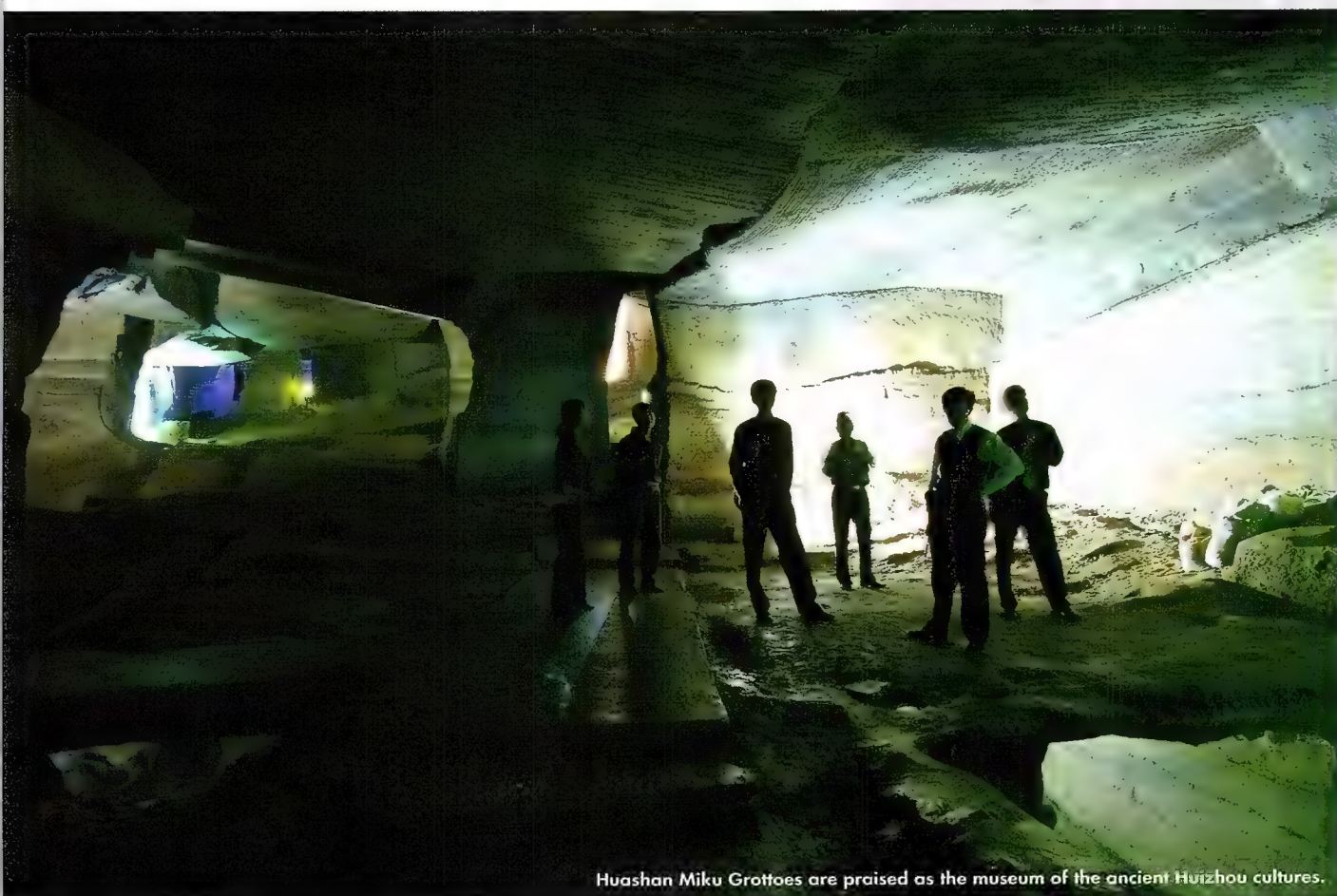
The rock caves in the Huashan Miku Grottoes possess peculiar values for research and enjoyment. In the rock caves, there are excavated fossils from Mesozoic era, dinosaurs' footprints, fossils of trees from 150 million years ago, the Jin Dynasty colour porcelains, iron drills, iron chisels, earthen bowls, pottery pots, porcelains and other mining tools and vessels. The colour porcelains found in the caves provide the basis that the excavation of the caves started in the Jin Dynasty (265) or earlier.

Currently, there are up to 36 rock caves. Since the caves have different sizes, the entire mountain becomes "hollow". People wonder how the 36 rock caves are interconnected or independent of each other. Some caves have their outlets just under the Xin'an River, forming the enigmatic "underwater rock caves". Inside the caves, the huge rocks and stone sculptures are vivid, like

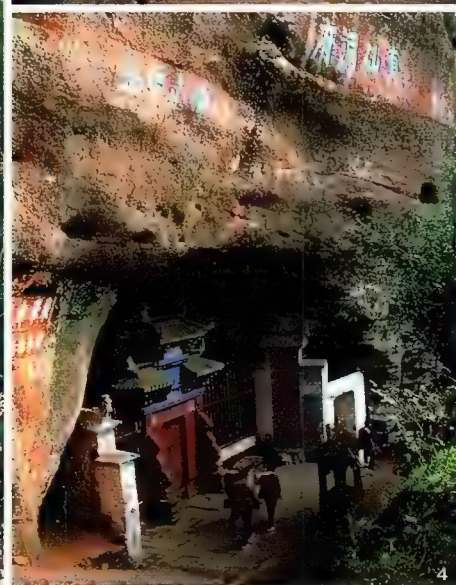
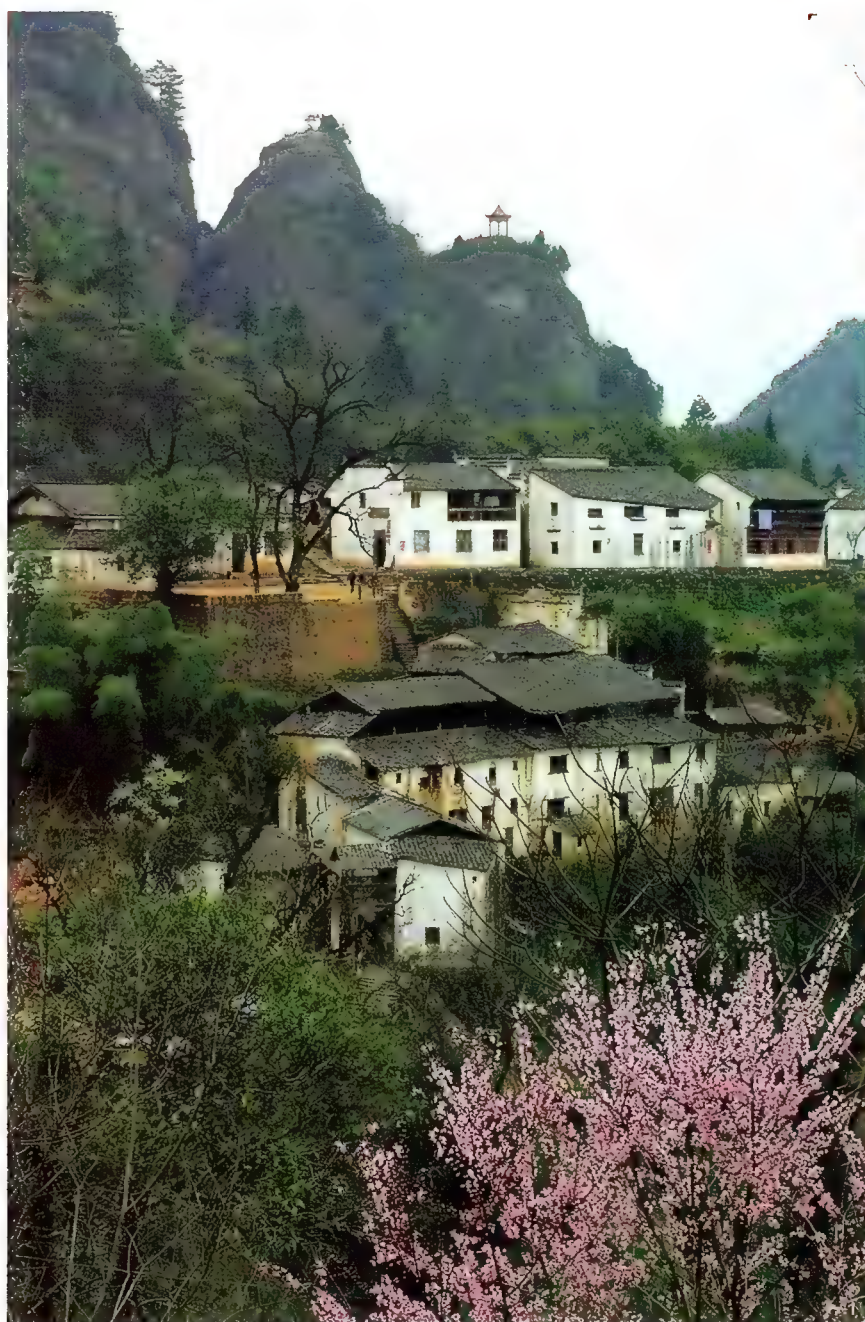
birds or beasts. Therefore, they are also praised as the museum of the ancient Huizhou cultures.

The largest feature of the Huashan Miku Grottoes is that these caves were drilled manually in ancient times. The rock caves that we are visiting today have no frescos, no figures of Buddha or textual records, different from other rock caves, such as the Yungang Grottoes in Datong, the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang and the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang. These caves have no textual records, no characters appeared on the inside of the walls, and not even any messages on these caves were recorded in the numerous historical chronicles of Huizhou. Therefore, later generations need to investigate the essential issues concerning the caves, such as when, who, how and why these caves were dug, and where the several million cubic metres of stones had been transported.

The cable-stayed suspension bridge across the Xin'an River is the No. 1 cable-stayed suspension bridge in the south of the River, 130 m in the entire length, 1.8 m in width, and 8.3 m above the water surface on usual days. Its Hui construction style combines closely with surrounding natural landscapes, adding new scenery to the Xin'an River. Along the riverbanks there are over 200,000 m² of sand beach and lawns, suitable for travelling, leisure and recreation.



Huashan Miku Grottoes are praised as the museum of the ancient Huizhou cultures.



1. Qiyun Mountain has the most wonderful pastoral scenery.
2. The unique Daoist culture
3. The ancient pathway recalls its glorious past.
4. A Daoist cave for meditation

Qiyun Mountain

The Qiyun Mountain, known as the White Mountain in ancient times, is located in the Xiuning County, Huangshan City. It was one of the four famous Daoist mountains in China once. When touring the south of the River, an emperor of the Qing Dynasty said that the Qiyun Mountain was the best famous mountain and next to heavens concerning scenery.

The Qiyun Mountain is a peculiar mountain, having a Danxia Landform, composed of fancy peaks, erratic

rocks and deep caves. The mountain distinguishes itself by its stone carvings, abstruse Daoist cultures and wonderful pastoral scenery. The Yuehua Street, the Nanshan Mountain, the Loushanglou building, the Yunyan Lake and other scenic spots all have their unique styles.

The Qiyun Mountain and the Huangshan Mountain stand side by side, having different characteristics. The Huangshan Mountain is steep and tall while the Qiyun Mountain shows extreme beauty. The Huangshan Mountain may have the best scenery in the world, but Qiyun Mountain is a world from heaven.

Xin'an River

After joining in Pukou, the Lianjiang and Jianjiang rivers become the Xin'an River. The river originates from Liugujian, a 1,363-m high mountain in Fengcun, in the Xiuning County. The brook expands as it rolls down, joining the Hengjiang River at Tunxi, then through the Shexian County into the Qiandao Lake. After passing the Xin'an River Power Station Dam, flowing into the Fuchun River, the Qiantang River, runs into the East Sea from west to east. In geography books, it is called a branch of the Qiantang River, which is 293 km long and covered an area of 11,600 km².

The water of the Xin'an River, at any depth, is so clear that you can see the bottom. In any season, the water surface is as clear as a mirror. This is indeed a great feature of the Xin'an River.

There are plenty of ponds and shoals in the Xin'an River. The Bing Pond in the Xiuning County, is called the first pond in Xin'an. Around it are tall peaks and trees, slim bamboos are scattered everywhere. When reaching the pond outlet, the narrow stream becomes wide. When going into the Shexian County, there are the Zhang Pond,



the Mian Pond and the Lun Pond. The three ponds are well known for their peculiar sceneries, and the origin of the famous "Santan Loquat".

Apart from lots of ponds, shoals in the Xin'an River bear wonderful views. In the early morning, you can see, in the Daxi Shoal in the segment of the Xin'an River in Tunxi, inverted images of mountains emerging from time to time. The sounds of talk, chopping and strike from bamboo rafts, wood rafts and sailing ships come into your ears. When the sun rises, the scenery looks like a Mountain Flower flashing red, and the flowing water in the river in the spring is of a blueish green. The silence and elegance

of the landscape will impress you very much, making you ponder for a long time.

Sailing on the river, one sees numerous natural and human landscapes, such as miraculous ridges and peaks, quietly elegant pastoral villages, civil residences, stone bridges and ancient pagodas with the architectural features of the Ming and Qing dynasties. 

1. The upper reaches of Xin'an River
2. Tunxi harbour by the Xin'an River



1. Food and Drink

On Huangshan Mountain, food and drink are very expensive because of labour.

Tips for Food and Drink on the Mountain

There are Beihai Restaurant and Shilin Grand Hotel around Beihai. If you order dishes, hot dishes at least cost ¥40, such as bean curd, fried mushroom and spicy diced chicken. Even a simple tomato egg soup costs ¥40, and cold dishes such as minced garlic cucumber also cost ¥20. Furthermore, please note that during off-season period, Beihai and Shilin Grand Hotel will close in turn. If you live near Xihai, Paiyun Tower Restaurant will be a pretty good recommendation since the dishes are divided into two types, regular dish and medium dish, which is very suitable for one person or those travellers who eat little. And prices are reasonable. One dish of green pepper with shredded meat or winter bamboo shoot with shredded meat costs ¥30, and egg soup or purple seaweed soup costs about ¥10.

In Yuping Tower Restaurant, which is near to Lianhua Hill, you can order not only dishes, but also fast food, which has three courses and one soup, and a big bowl of plain rice. The courses are mainly chicken and tenderloin, which tastes pretty good and costs ¥20. The prices of the restaurants at the foot of Huangshan Mountains are relatively cheaper. Take Taoyuan Restaurant for example. Hot soup is about ¥20. If you consider it uneconomical to order dishes in restaurants, you can take instant noodles to cram yourself with food. There are refreshment kiosks and supermarkets on Huangshan Mountains and most supermarkets are beside hotels. But the prices of all instant noodles start from ¥10 and supermarkets will provide you boiled water to make the noodle. As for mineral water, ready-to-serve sausage, cracker, etc., they cost at least ¥10, which is 4-5 times higher than the prices at the foot of the mountain, so it is suggested to prepare them before you go up the mountain.

Food at the Foot of the Mountain

Although food on Huangshan Mountains is expensive, food at the foot of the mountain has a wide range of selection, and most of the restaurants have traditional Huizhou dishes for your taste. Huizhou dishes are famous for the cooking of delicacies of every kind and have a preference for

using winter bamboo shoot, mushroom and mould bean curd as materials. They are expert at grilling and stewing and lay special stress on colour, taste and duration and degree of heating.

Recommended Restaurants

Meishi Renjia (Cate Family) No.245 Old Street, Tunxi
Xin'an Renjia (Xin'an Family) No.1 West Binjiang Road, Tunxi



2. Lodging

Lodging on the Mountain

Lodging on Huangshan Mountains is also a bothersome problem, especially in winter when some of the hotels will close in turn due to the decrease in the number of travellers. If you intend to take lodging on the mountain, you'd better contact the hotel in advance.

Room prices of some hotels are listed below, which is for your reference only.

Shilin Grand Hotel (Four-star) standard room ¥720
Guangmingding Mountain Villa (Three-star) standard room ¥580
Paiyun Tower Hotel (Three-star) standard room ¥580
Yuping Tower Hotel (Four-star) standard room ¥560
Taoyuan Hotel (Three-star) standard room ¥560

Tips

* Basically, the lodging cost on Huangshan Mountains is expensive. However, since winter night on Huangshan Mountains is very cold, it is safer to choose hotels equipped with central heating and hot water supply. If you do not intend to travel around the whole Xihai Grand Canyon scenic spot, it's enough to stay just one night on the mountain.

Accommodation at the Foot of the Mountain

There are many hotels near Old Street, Airport Avenue or bus station in Tunxi for your selection, which is very convenient.

Huangshan Mountains Golf Hotel (Five-star)
 No.78 Airport Avenue, Tunxi
Huangshan Mountains Jiuzhou Grand Hotel (Three-star)
 No.111 East Huangshan Road, Tunxi
Huaxi Hotel (Three-star)
 No.1 Sizhen Street, Tunxi District

3. Four Spectacular Scenes of Huangshan Mountains

Four spectacular scenes of Huangshan Mountains include the sea of clouds, fairy stone, odd pine and hot spring. Under the coordination of natural conditions, Huangshan Mountains has sea of clouds to watch all year around and every time a cleared sky appears after a rain, you can better view the spectacular scene of a vast and immeasurable sea of clouds in Huangshan Mountain. The best places for watching Qianhai (Front Sea) is in Yuping Tower, Donghai (East Sea) in Donghai Gate, Xihai (West Sea) in Paiyun Pavilion and Tianhai (Sky Sea) in Guangming Peak.

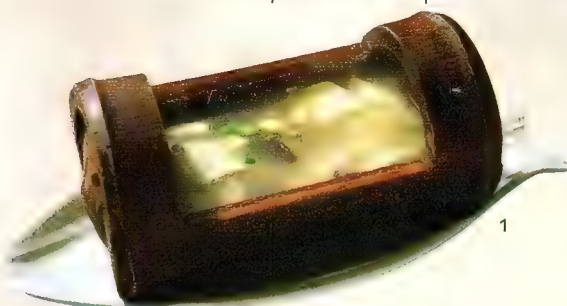
As for Huangshan Mountain's fairy stones, they are also amazing, which are scattered in various scenic spots.

Huangshan Mountain's odd pines are also a scene you cannot miss. Yingke Pine has become the symbol of Huangshan Mountain. In addition, there are the famous Heihu, Lianli, Wolong and Shuqin pines.

The fourth spectacular scene of Huangshan Mountains is hot spring, but it seems unworthy of the title, since in winter the spring water is dried up and there are few natural hot springs. If you want to soak in hot spring you can only go to hot spring area to enjoy indoor hot spring. However, hot springs on Huangshan Mountains only open in the daytime.

4. Precautions for Travelling Huangshan Mountains in Winter

1. Warm-keeping has to be noted. Besides down and feather garment, you'd better wear combing coat. In addition, gloves, mountain-climbing shoes and warm-keeping socks are necessities. Do not wear leather shoes or plastic shoes.
2. There are so many beautiful winter scenes on Huangshan Mountains that you cannot take them all in. But please remember that safety must be noted while you are photographing and hiking.
3. Most hotels on Huangshan Mountains are equipped with central heating, but the temperature at night is usually below zero, so you should bring spare warm-





keeping bag with you.

4. Winter weather on Huangshan Mountains varies greatly and the wind blows violently in higher mountain, so it is inadvisable to bring rain gear. When in thunderstorm weather, please do not hold the iron chain and shelter under a tree from rain.
5. Except some specified places for smoking (such as hotels), it is prohibited to smoke in scenic spots while travelling.

5. Weather on Huangshan Mountains

1. Besides the information of weather on Huangshan Mountains that can be viewed on the Internet, Huangshan Mountains TV station (Public Channel) has latest daily weather forecast for Huangshan Mountain, which is normally broadcast after the news show of Anhui and is around 8:00 P.M.
2. There is daily sunrise and sunset time on the receiving-desk of hotels in Huangshan Mountains' scenic spots for your regular viewing.
3. The following conditions must be met before it snows on Huangshan Mountains: Firstly it must rain and then cold air moves down and makes the temperature drop. If there is no cold air to reinforce after a rain, it will not always have the opportunity to snow. Snow scene on Huangshan Mountains normally appears after midwinter the earliest. However, when it snows, many places on Huangshan Mountains cannot be reached (such as Lianhua Hill), and what's more, it's

likely to encounter thick fog weather, and thus photographing result may not be good.

6. Souvenirs

The Four Treasures of Study (Hui Inkstick, She Inkstab, Wang Brush and Cheng Paper), wood carving, Hui inkstick shortbread, Huangshan Maofeng (a kind of tea), etc.

7. Traffic

By Air

Shenzhen Airlines has Thursday and Sunday flight (ZH9951) departing for Huangshan and the time is 18:50~20:15 at night. The return time is every Saturday and Sunday (ZH9952) and the time is 21:00~22:35. You can take a ship at China-Hong Kong Ferry. The journey takes one hour. When you arrive, there will be free bus to go to the airport and it takes about 10 minutes.

Traffic in Huangshan City

Tunxi bus station has coaches to go to Huangshan Mountains scenic spots, Taiping Town, Yi Town, She Town, etc. It is not far from the bus station to Old Street and No.1, 2 and 7 bus can reach there, which takes about 15 minutes and ticket price is ¥1.

Traffic in Huangshan Mountains Scenic Spots

You can take a bus from Tunxi bus station to Taiping and take off at Tangkou Town. The journey takes about 1.5 hours and ticket price is ¥10.

When you arrive at Tangkou you can change to take a special bus of Xin Guoxian to Huangshan Mountains

scenic spots to go to Ciguang Pavilion or Yungu Temple and ticket price is ¥10. Bus shift is not frequent in off-season and normally you need to wait for half an hour to one hour. Besides, you can go to Huangshan Mountains scenic spots in Taiping direction.

There are three ropeways in Huangshan Mountains scenic spots, namely Yuping Ropeway from Ciguang Pavilion to Yuping scenic spot, Yungu Ropeway from Yungu Temple to White Swan Ridge and Taiping Ropeway from Songgu Nunnery to Danxia. The peak season ticket price of Yungu Ropeway is ¥81, and others are ¥66; off season ticket price is ¥55 for all. Since there are fewer travellers in off season, ropeway shift is not frequent and it's even likely to be under maintenance or close.

8. Scenic Spots around Huangshan Mountains

Hui Garden, Tangyue Memorial Archway Group, Doushan Street, Huashan Mystery Cave, Cheng Clan Three Houses, Cheng Dawei Abacus Museum, etc.

1. Huangshan Shanshui bean curd (by Chan Yat Nin)
2. Huangshan sesame seed cake is a featured snack in Huangshan. (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. Huangshan Observatory and Guangmingding Mountain Villa (by Mickey Ching)
4. Wood-carving folding fan is a popular souvenir of Xidi. (by Chan Yat Nin)



Glittering Silver— *Miao Lusheng Festival*

Photos & Article by Zhao Xiaying

From Spring Festival to spring ploughing each year, Miao villages of Zhouxi Town (Kaili City, Guizhou Province) hold the lusheng meeting in turn. On 19th and 20th of the first lunar month, lusheng bands from villages gather in Heshaba near the town to celebrate the grand Gannangxiang Lusheng Festival.



Gannangxiang is the transliteration of Miao language, means god-given place in the lower reaches of a river. Long time ago, the poor music, dance and beats played during the festival offended the god, who lived in the lower reaches of the river. The crops could not grow in Zhouxi. For years, people had no harvest.

Later, the villagers set up Gannangxiang Lusheng Hall in Heshaba and introduced high, powerful and pleasant lusheng melody from nearby villages.

From then on, dancing gestures and beats of Zhouxi were in harmony with new melody and improved lusheng dance. The god was so happy with the melody and dance that he blessed the Miao families in Zhouxi Town. And then Gannangxiang Lusheng Festival passed on from generation to generation.

I went to Zhouxi Town on 19th of the first lunar month last year. I found the Miao girls who joined Lusheng Festival were wearing radiant traditional costumes with exquisite design and various silver accessories. When they were walking, you could hear the twinkling sound. What a wonderful sight!

Silver jewelry plays a very important role in Miao clothing and it is a symbol of status and charm. Therefore, Miao people like to wear all their silver accessories in the festivals. With the help of mothers, the girls dressed up carefully. After dressed and guided by the guys playing lusheng, these girls stepped into Gannangxiang Lusheng Hall following the beats.

The location of Gannangxiang Lusheng Hall—Heshaba—is a wonderful place. During spring and summer period, people can't walk at all because in winter the river is rising. But after autumn harvest, Zhouxi River begins to dry up and a large part of sand and stone is exposed. During New Year period, the wide and flat dam can hold more than



10,000 people and becomes the most ideal venue for Lusheng Festival.

Various lusheng bands shaped up various dance rings in Lusheng Hall. At first, the lusheng beat was low and the harmony simple, the dance steps and actions of girls were slow. With the increase of bands and dancers, the Lusheng Hall became so hot and reached its climax gradually. The guys played the brisk melody; the girls clapped hands and danced. Pleasant and melodious lusheng melody came from all around and silver accessories twinkled.

On the afternoon, 20th of the first lunar month, watchers crowded into the Heshaba Dam, filling the roads and small paths. There were pleasant lusheng melody in the Lusheng Hall and more

than 10 dance rings were turning around ceaselessly.

In the rings, the silver accessories of Miao girls were glittering like a silvery sea. Many villagers were holding a singing match on the hills. At the same time, a dangerous and exciting bullfighting was holding at the other side of Heshaba; there were laughter and applause everywhere.

At night, Lusheng Festival had finished. Holding the silk banners, the lusheng bands who won the prizes were not willing to leave, so they played lusheng and danced. The night in mountain was dark and peaceful. In the dark, people returned homes with joyful feelings.



1. Modern Miao girls are still very interested in playing Lusheng.
2. Miao girls dance elegantly with rhythm.
3. Mothers help to forming hair bun for the daughters.
4. The river bed of Heshaba, where the Festival is held, dried up only in winter.
5. Led by the guys who played lusheng, Miao girls stepped into Gannangxiang Lusheng Hall following the beats.

Travel Tips

Transportation:

You can go to Kaili by bus or by train from Guiyang. The bus takes about 2.5 hour. You can also take train from Guiyang to Yuping (K946/945), start off at 7 A.M. and arrive Kaili at 10 A.M. It cost ¥36 for each person. In Huanchengbei Road which is near the business hall in Kaili City, you can find many minibus to Zhouxi Town, which takes only half an hour. After Lusheng Festival, you can take the bus back to Kaili.

Accommodation:

Options for accommodation in Kaili, including:

Kaili Hotel, ★★, ¥80-320 per room
Yinpanpo Folk Hotel, ★★, ¥60-280 per room
Guotai Hotel, ★★, ¥168-380 per room
Hongyan Hotel, ★★, ¥168-380 per room





Huayao

A Reclusive Tribe in the Mountain

There is the high and cold mountainous area called Huang Mountain in the north of Longhui County, Hunan Province, where lives the ancient Huayao nationality. They live in reclusion in the lofty mountains and high ranges for generations with unique folk customs and practices.

Photos & Article by Lao Hou

It is storied that the ancestors of Huayao suffered from the suppression of the feudal officials as well as the discrimination of the public, and they had to migrate from place to place. Finally they settled down in a place named Xiaoshajiang under the foot of the thickly forested Baima Mountain, where it was cut off from the outside world. However,

they still could not live in peace and were cruelly slaughtered by the governmental troops. Therefore, the place is also named the Small Slaughterhouse. Only a couple of youth survived themselves in the thickly cucumber canopy. From then on, the cucumber became the sacred. The couple escaped and multiplied in the boundless forests east of Xuefeng

Mountain. Up to now there are over 6,000 people.

Although Huayao is a branch of Yao Nationality, the people know nothing about King Pan, the earliest ancestor of their nationality and they have no common feature with Yao nationality. Some say that they may belong to Miao nationality, while

there is no hint with it. Perhaps it is because the women in the village are all gorgeously dressed like the dazzling flower that the name of Huayao (meaning flowery Yao) spreads far and wide.

Sacred Trees and Rocks

It is actually easy to find the reclusive Huayao villages: where the lap has the towering trees, there is the village. Dozens of villages that I find are hidden from view by the old woods without any except. Inside the Miaosha Village, there lives an old reclining tree of one thousand years old with twisted roots, and it can only be rounded with eight hands. White trumpet-like flowers will blossom from the newly sprung twig in spring. Thus, it is called the White Flower Tree. The villager can exactly forecast the harvest of that very year by observing the quantity and distribution of flowers. That is the Harvest Tree known by all people in that area.

The villagers believe old trees have absorbed the nimbus of the nature and become deities for generations. Therefore, they are awe-stricken by them and dare not damage them. Even if the tree has withered and declined, they dare not drag it home but let it run its own course. No wonder that in the period of Great Leap Forward (in late 1950s) the forests there were perfectly preserved, while trees in other places were all destroyed for steel making.

Beside the worship of tree, the villagers also worship the mountain rocks. The village is filled with odd-shaped giant rocks everywhere: around the house, beside the steam, road and even in the middle of the field with the vivid shape of lion, tiger, dog, gate guardian or the big belly Maitreya. People of Huayao believe that it is myriads of rock gods that guard the village and their house permanently. Though they have no custom of censuring and kowtow, they are extremely pious toward nature from generation to generation.

Contented Heart

Due to the remote location, every family of Huayao suffers from poverty. However, they remain satisfied with their lives and plough and weed on the arid mountain fields. Since the mountain range shares the high and cold zone, the place is always haunted with the dense fog, heavy icy snow, evil squall or continuous overcast and rain at internals. In former years, peasants had to rent the warm field under the foot of the mountain dozens of kilometres distant for raising rice seedlings in spring. After the rice seeds sprout and grow into seedlings under the drudgery, they had to carry them back for transplanting. What these hardworking people wish is the favourable wind and suitable rain so that they can harvest enough corn, maize and potato for a living. They have no concept of making a quick profit, and there is not even one person who sells common goods like cigarettes or melon seeds among the village of over 6,000.

In recent years, the local government promotes the production of Chinese medicinal materials, which benefits the villagers of Huayao. The reason is that the area is the very breeding ground for medicinal materials with

the altitude of over 1,200 m and the climate of humidity, low temperature and coolness. Swiftly the medicinal materials of the mountain win the reputation in Hunan Province. The output of honeysuckle accounts for half of that of the whole country, and the region is praised as the Homeland of Honeysuckle.

Masters of Cross-Stitched Work

Comparing to the simple life, the costume of Huayao is quite gorgeous. The ladies especially enjoy dressing up in dainty clothes. The traditional outer garment is the dark blue mandarin long gown bordered with the red cloth and sewed with red cloth buttons as well as the colourful girdle of over 10 m high, which is the proudest original flower pail-form skirt. Girls embroider the exquisite patterns in the coarse indigo blue calico with the delicate white thread. The fly front and the sweep that are made with the fresh red cloth and stitched with the pentad velour or wool are quite gorgeous. The combination of contrast colours expresses fully the unique style of Yao.

1. The women in the village are gorgeously dressed.
2. The reclusive and picturesque mountain





Girls of Yao nationality are all master of cross-stitched work. Having taught the needlecraft by their mothers since six or seven years old, they are adept at cross-stitched work when grown up.

Most women are not educated, but they are quick-witted and nimble-

fingered. No matter what they catch sight of, they can embroider it vividly. For example, there were many tigers in the forests, so girls like to embroider tigers in thousands of postures. Even if the pattern is complicate, they can go on with the work smoothly without drawing or tracing. It takes two to three months to

make a skirt with complicated patterns, which needs over 200,000 stitches without any omission or error.

However, the clothes of men are almost the same with the Han Chinese, but the only difference is that aged men are used to wearing the black and white headscarf.

Hospitable and Generous

Villagers of Huayao are hospitable. When a guest visits them, they shall warmly invite him for a dinner and the host and neighbours shall urge him for a good drink of the rice wine. Though women cannot accompany the guest in the dinner, they shall edge in to admire the guest with their lady friends and fervidly offer food for the guest.



1. The scenic Huijiawan waterfall
2. Huayao people live in the cold mountains.
3. Getting rid of facial hair with a thread

Travel Tips

Transportation

1. It takes about five hours by bus from the south depot of Changsha to Shaoyang and Longhui with the fee of ¥50 to 60; three to four hours by regular bus or taxi with the rent of about ¥150 from Longhui to Xiaoshajiang.

2. It takes four to five hours by bus from Huaihua to Jinshiqiao. You need to get off in Xiaoshajiang after passing the beautiful Xunfeng Mountain and take the motorbike to the Huxing Mountain four kilometres distant.

It takes over two hours by bus from the south depot of Changsha to Longhui County with the fee of ¥76; three hours from the west terminus of Longhui to Huxing Mountain (92 km) with the fee of about ¥15 (The bus shall reach the most beautiful Dashiutuo Village at noon, which costs you more ¥2). Every village is accessible with the highway, so you may take the medium-size bus or rent the taxi or motorbike.

Accommodation

In the County Town

Friendship Hotel ★★ The luxury room costs about ¥200.

Tel: (86 739) 824 0888 (Governmental guest houses, Sunshine Hotel and Shenlong Hotel are also available)

Gaozhou Spa with the rare medical hot spring: ¥80 to 150 for the stay in the villa in woods; ¥28 for outdoors hot spring bath and ¥48 for indoors; ¥90 for compartment (indoors pool and compartment with the sauna of both ice and dry steam).

Tel: (86 739) 880 5999/ (137) 8914 1828

In the Township of Yao

Governmental guesthouse in the township of Yao and hostels and farmhouses in Datutuo Village: ¥10 per night. Hongdu Hotel and private hostels in Xiaoshajiang Township (seven kilometres distant from Yao villages): ¥10 to 20.

Local Food

Smoke-dried bolus of bean curd mixed with pig blood, the soup braised with cattle meat and mixed with pepper oil, rice cake and rice wine.

Travel Guide

Day 1: Datutuo Village, where you can experience the folk customs and practices of Huayao and view the bamboo forest and rocks of queer shapes and the rock waterfall.

Day 2: the gorge of Huxing Mountain; the Tiger Howling Rock and the Waterfall of Triple Dragon Cave; returning to Datutuo Village for night stay.

Day 3: Datuo → Miaoshan → Mao'ao → Yanbi → Township Government for lunch → Chongmu

Day 4: Visit the Huijiawan Yao's Village of Xiaoshajiang and the

waterfalls of the gorge. Go down the mountain 20 km apart from the village and check in at the Gaozhou Hot Spring.



Original

Wedding of Huayao

Photos & Article by Liu Haibin



Huayao has an original wedding tradition. Girls and lads may enjoy free dating, but it is the son of the mother's brother whom the daughter should marry. If the son refuses it or the uncle has no son, she may marry to another lad.

A respectable man who has the silver tongue usually acts as the matchmaker. The interested family shall first invite the matchmaker and make an offer to the other party. Until the parents of the two families agree, the wedding will be held on an auspicious day.

At the wedding, the matchmaker from the bridegroom's side as well as several men who carry the betrothal gifts shall set off to the bride's family in the early morning with the oilpaper umbrella and a big rooster. The bridegroom shall carry the betrothal gifts together with the team. After arriving at the bride's home, the matchmaker shall place the umbrella and the rooster in the shrine of the

hall. The family of the bride shall fetch the umbrella whereat and put the twelve prepared colourful velour lumps into the umbrella, which are the betrothal token before the matchmaker fetches the umbrella back. These velour lumps shall be preserved by the family of the bridegroom, but if the marriage ends in divorce, they will be returned back to the wife's family.

The wife's family shall serve guests of the husband's side in the hall, while at the same time they send someone to fetch some mud from the paddy field and put them along both sides of the door. After drinking four bowls of wine, the guests as well as the matchmaker immediately fetch the oilpaper umbrella and the rooster and rush out of the half-opened front door when hearing the sudden sound of firecracker in the hall. The women outsiders shall smear mud all over the guests. Since this is a gesture for the wife's family to show gratitude, the guests do not mind the mud at all and will speak fine words in return. Furthermore, they should keep the dirty clothes for three to five days before washing.

When getting married, the bride is escorted by her relatives except her parents. The bustling escort, which

may consist of several hundred people including girls and women holding the beautiful umbrella, walks along the winding mountainous road under the leadership of the matchmaker to the bridegroom's home. The escort team should arrive at the bridegroom's home at dusk. When the escort team is 250 m distant from the home, the guests of the bridegroom's side shall make a paper post, fixing twenty sticks with red thread on the red paper to shun evils and ghosts. At that time, the bride and escort women shall unfold the umbrella and go forward slowly to the front of the exorcising desk outside the hall. The oldster shall intone loudly the exorcisms and slay the rooster, making a circle on the ground with the dripping blood. After the ceremony, the bridegroom's side prepares the alcohol in front of the house to welcome guests. Afterwards, the bride and the escort women fold the umbrella and enter the hall.

The new couple does not see each other at the first night. The bride will spend the whole jubilant and exciting night on the stool in the hall accompanied by all of the relatives and guests, playing games like folk song singing, squatting (see note 1), joke and fun telling, etc.



Note 1: squatting is one of the unique etiquettes of Huayao. After the guests are seated in the hall, the coming guests shall squat on their legs one by one, speaking fine words or telling jokes.

1. The bridal team (by Lao huo)
2. The matchmaker
3. The bride

The Fate of



Because of the changes of times, Chuan Opera, which was once flourished in Ba Shu for several centuries, is now declining. Confronted by the ever-decreasing number of audiences, the performers are facing a hard life.

Chuan Opera

Photos & Article by Chen Jin

Chuan Opera used to be the most popular entertainment for Ba Shu people. In fact, at that time, Chuan Opera fans often gathered on the streets, courtyards or teahouses to play the suona or huqin, and sang the opera passages. Some fans were even proficient enough to compile a play by themselves, and some were invited as guest actors in real performances. In short, the Chuan Opera was integrated into the daily life of Sichuan people.

Although it had enjoyed the same brilliant years as Peking Opera, Kun Opera and other operas, Chuan Opera is now losing more and more audiences as the society is getting modernised. At present, the state-owned Chuan Opera troupes can still depend on the state's subsidies, but private Chuan Opera organisations can only survive on the mercy of the market.

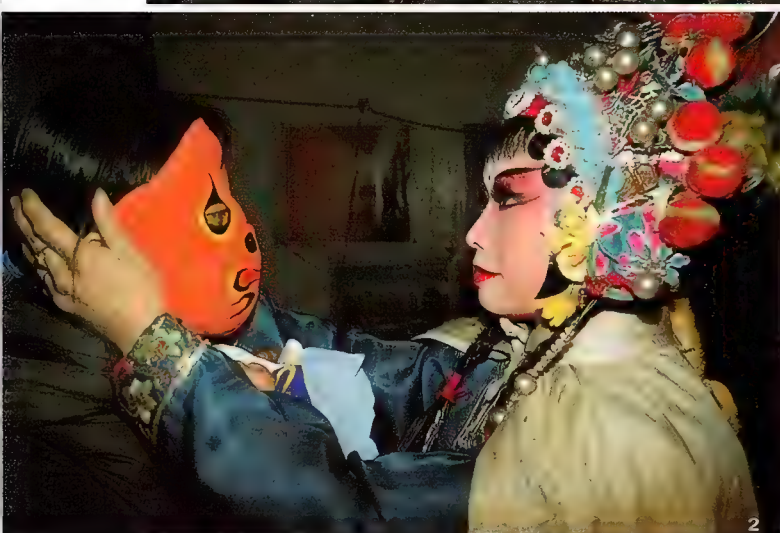
—◆ The Soul of the Opera Troupe ◆—

Several years ago, Mr. Wan Guibin organised his own Wangjiang Chuan Opera Troupe after retirement from a state-owned Chuan Opera troupe. Wan Guibin had been a very successful male role actor. Since 1952, he came to Yibing from his hometown at the age of nine to master the arts. During the seven years as an apprentice, he was equipped with solid foundation and essential performing skills under strict teaching.

During those years, Chuan Opera was a popular entertainment for Sichuan people, and

1. Face-changing is the elite of Chuan Opera.
2. Wangjiang Chuan Opera Troupe has a good reputation in Chengdu. Its performance during holidays and festivals usually attracts lots of people. Now, the troupe is staging the famous gown opera "Bajiu zhai".





actors enjoyed high social statuses. Even the apprentices could enjoy the “three fours”—four meals a day, taking four baths daily, and getting new clothes four seasons a year. In addition, they were no lack of education opportunities.

With the help of his wife and daughter, who still love Chuan Opera, Mr. Wan has spent all his savings on his troupe. But it is not easy to make a living: a crowd of 200

audiences yields about ¥600, but it barely covers the expenditures (salaries of more than 20 people in the troupe, rental, water and electricity bills, cosmetics, etc). On usual days, when there are few audiences, he pays instead of getting paid. He does not regard Chuan Opera as a way to make a living. Instead, he just devotes himself to what he loves.

Wangjiang Chuan Opera Troupe is very famous in Chengdu Chuan Opera field. As a private theatrical troupe of Chuan Opera, this troupe, together with Muzong Factory (Club) Chuan Opera Troupe, and Wu Yi Er (Factory Club) Chuan Opera Troupe are called the “three great troupes” in Chengdu civil Chuan Opera field. It is a fortunate thing for actors to join in the three troupes.

How long can the Wangjiang Chuan Opera Troupe last? Many come and go. Fortunately, there is a person like Wan Guibin who takes action to keep Chuan Opera performances running.

◆ Struggling Troupes ◆

Even the famous theatrical troupes are having such a hard time; you can imagine how difficult it is for small theatrical troupes to survive.

For the small troupes, the market can fall into slack season and peak season. When the climate is warm, during traditional holidays or rural leisure, the market goes into the peak season. At that time, there are lots of troupes involved. In case of extreme weather, the market goes into the slack season. Many troupes have to be closed, and actors either choose to go home or wait for the next peak season.

However, small theatrical troupes also find their ways to cope. Firstly, they constantly put new plays to attract audiences. Secondly, they often employ new and famous actors. The third is to move to other places to open new markets.

I knew Wang Liang in the 1980s. He was just 20 years old then, but he acted as a male role for several years in the Rongyi Chuan Opera Troupe organised by Li Guanlu. It was Li Guanlu who first took the lead in organising private Chuan Opera theatrical troupes at the late 1970s, and eventually more troupes have gradually established around Chengdu and rural areas.

The early Yongyi Chuan Opera Troupe took the club of the Second Railway Branch Bureau located near the Tongjin Bridge.

That was a meeting hall, a formal stage and several hundred of row chairs. Their performances were always so attractive that seats were all occupied. However, in just a few years, more theatrical troupes appeared, but the number of fans showed no sign of increase, and the opera market declined. The club was leased to others, and the

1. Wuhou Shrine is one of the performance places of Chuan Opera.

2. Actors are trying out the types of facial makeup.

3. Wang Liang and his father-in-law Li Guanlu are resting at the break.

4. This is the ceremony of Lingguan Zhentai. An actor is killing a chicken and spraying the blood on the lingguan magic figures. The audiences can attach the magic figures to the gate to shun evils.



3

troupe had to continue its performance in a teahouse. Later on, old Li Guanlu retired, and his son-in-law Wang Liang and daughter Li Qiying took up the troupe.



4



Mysterious Face-Changing

Face-changing is a special skill in Chuan Opera performance. There are three methods of face changing: 1. Applying colour. An actor holds several colours in his hand, and he applies them very quickly. 2. Switching mask. Several masks of silk fabric are attached to the face layer by layer, and actors can take off the mask discreetly by pulling the mask's thread. The several face changing of the child in Jinshan Temple use this skill. 3. Employing qigong. The late famed Peng Sihong acted as Kong Ming in Empty Castle Plan. He employed qigong to change the colour of his face, from red to white and then to blue, indicating the role's emotions.

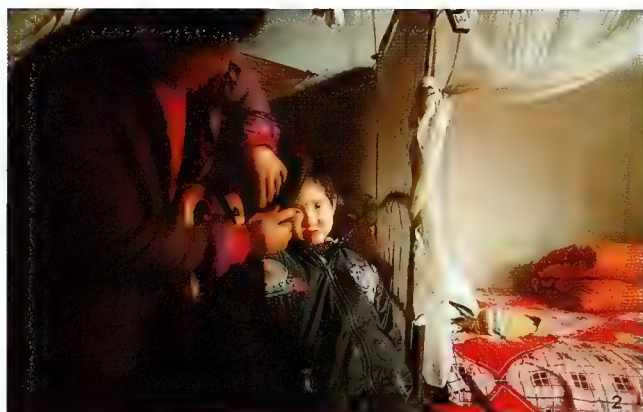
At present, the second method is most often used.

◆ The Next Generation of Chuan Opera ◆

Nowadays, Wang Liang's Yongyi Chuan Opera Troupe still remains although actors come and go. During my interview, the troupe is performing in Guanyu Temple of Jinlun Town, Guanghan City. Although 70 years old, Li Guanlu is still active on the arena, and even his three granddaughters are also acting.

Among the three daughters of Wang Liang, Nana is 16 years old, and has no interest in further education after middle school. Shasha is 14 years old, and Tingting is 9 years old. Usually they are attended by their grandma. On holidays, they live with their parents for some time. Deeply influenced by Chuan Opera, they are expected to carry on their family business, but Nana surprised me by saying, "I will never learn chuan opera even if I am beaten to death."

Learning the sad fates of other young actors, these sisters are not willing to stay here, but they are not bold enough to go elsewhere.





◆ Close Relations among Cast and Crew ◆

There is a grandma and grandson in the troupe. The grandma, not over 50 years old, seems older than she is, and the grandson is just over 6 years old. The boy has small eyes, and his name is Yi Ruoyu. He seldom meets his mother and does not know who his father is. Since actors live a wandering life, they have no family planning. Yi Ruoyu's parents had worked in the same troupe, fell into love, and gave birth to him. However, not more than one year later, they departed when both of them were less than 20 years old. Eventually, the baby was left to the care of his grandma.

Fortunately, Yi Ruoyu lives in the big family of the troupe, and he is not only loved by his grandma but also cared by each member of the troupe. The intelligent Yi Ruoyu learned to help everyone, willing to do many chores without any complaint. When a child role is needed during the performance, Yi Ruoyu can help out. Wang Liang would like to give him some money, which Yi Ruoyu could buy some sweets and share them with his fellows.

◆ Fierce Dispute due to Rehearsing ◆

Despite of the hardships in running the troupes, the crew can live in harmony for most of the time. However, they often stage fierce dispute about the understanding of a plot and grasping of a skill



1. At break, Li Guanlu likes to be together with his granddaughters.
2. Grandma Yi Hong is making up her grand child, who is ready to go to the stage.
3. Farmers of Huanglongxi are watching a performance.
4. "Dacha Play" is the liveliest scene in the Chuan Opera. "Mulian Story" uses real knives in the play.
5. Wang Liang's theatrical troupe is performing in Shenzhanshu.



during rehearsing.

Generally speaking, for the great troupes like those state-owned opera troupes or Wangjiang Chuan Opera who have fixed performance locations, specific rehearsing is a must before formal performance. For a small troupe, the case is different. The performance location is not fixed and actors are unstable. Actors have limited time for discussion before a play is launched, and they often talk it over at the dinning table or mahjong table.

Historically, Chuan Opera is divided into different schools, such as the "Chuanxiba School" of Chengdu, the "Chuanbeihe School" of Nanchong, the "Ziyanghe School" of Zizhong and Ziyang, and the "Xiachuandong School" of Chongqing. Each school has its celebrated plays. Even for the same play, different schools have different performance skills. The actors of small troupe come from everywhere and are influenced by different schools, so they have their distinct understanding.

But argument is only the temporary relief of emotions.

Confronted with the stagnant market and austere operating atmosphere, the cast and crew clearly know that unity is strength.

◆ In Need of Subsidies ◆

To avoid the dismissing of a troupe, each member is trying every effort to finance. Wang Liang has a car for rent, and he uses the income to support the troupe.

Li Fengru had been an actress of the state-owned Xichang Chuan Opera Troupe, and took up a business after the re-organisation of the troupe. In Wenjiang, she runs a Guifei Perfume Factory. To make her dreams come true, she has formed a troupe and named it Guifei Perfume Chuan Opera Troupe. The troupe can promote the products and the business can support the troupe. However, few people can be as successful in running both a troupe and an enterprise.

Certainly, there is another method that has to be followed without any other better way. On a day, the Anyue Chuan Opera Troupe organised by Master Bai Yuqing was performing in Baijia Tea Shop in the suburb of Chengdu. A friend and I went to the site at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Then, it was the time to begin, and all actors were dressed up, waiting at the back stage. The beginning gong was struck again and again, but actors were not present on the stage at half past two. Looking around, I found, in the hall of more than 100 m², there were only 20 audiences including my friend and me. At that moment, one actor came to the stage, saying politely,

Chuan Opera in Chengdu

You can enjoy Chuan Opera performances in the following three places.

1. Chengdu Chuan Opera Art Centre (namely Yuelai Tea Corner) in Huaxingzheng Street: Saturday 2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M., Chuan Opera Zhezi Play performance, where some famous professional actors always perform as leading actors.

2. Chengdu Muzong Factory Club: Each day 2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M., performance of civil Chuan Opera troupe, where there is Zhezi Play and large-purdah play.

3. Chengdu No. 512 Mail Box Club: Each day 2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M., performance of civil Chuan Opera troupe, similar to that in Chengdu Muzong Factory Club, where there is Zhezi Play and large-screen play.



"Dear audiences, we are very sorry..." He meant that the audiences were too few that the money collected cannot afford the performance (the income of actors usually depends on the number of performance, and no pay is given without performance), and the performance could not continue unless the audiences pay more.

In a troupe, actors are divided into different class. A senior actor plays an important role, so his pay is more. That day, the to-be-performed play was the White Snake. The three main characters alone should receive ¥15 each. But at the time, there were only 20 audiences. The total admission was only ¥50, it was not enough to support the performance.

The audiences were, mostly old men and women between 70 and 80 years old. They loved Chuan Opera, but they were not wealthy themselves and could not pay more.

The embarrassing silence lasted for five minutes. When everyone was about to leave, the actor came out again, "Thanks for Mr. Wu Jingui who makes up the short charges. The performance will begin soon, sorry for making you wait for so long!" Wu Jingui was a retired teacher, and he donated ¥45 from his pension.

The play started eventually, but would there be a performance tomorrow?

1. Small troupes have no fixed locations, and the places for performance are the home of the cast and crew.
2. Female role Liu Zuoxiang, waiting for performance, is rehearsing at the last moment.
3. The boss of Guifei Perfume Chuan Opera Troupe is distributing salaries to cast and crew.





Apart from Ningxia, there is another region in China where Muslims are concentrated — the Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province. The border between the Loess Plateau and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has gone through the transition from an agricultural region to a pasture region, and the Muslims who live there have hence developed their own unique traditions and culture. They have preserved the practice of different sects of Islam, as well as the exquisite art of brick carving. With such strong Muslim flavour, it is no wonder that Linxia has been nicknamed “The Small Mecca”.



Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture:

Located in the upper reaches of Yellow River, the prefecture's total area is about 7,983 km². Among the population of 1.84 million, about 56% of them (1.03 million) are Muslims of different sects. The prefecture has one city and seven counties, and the prefecture's capital is the Linxia City.



Linxia

A Land of Unique Muslim Culture

Photos & Article by Du Dianwen

Originally named Hezhou, Linxia was an important stop and a tea-horse trading centre along the ancient Silk Road. Although it is an autonomous region of the Hui people, there are also other ethnic groups such as the Salar, Dongxiang and Bonan minorities. The latter two mainly cluster in Linxia. Despite the ethnic disparity, majority of the people believe in Islam and are Muslims of various sects and orders. Given their long history, the practices and styles of these sects and orders are numerous and variegated. The spread of Islam into China had further enhanced them with distinguishing characteristics through its development process.

1. The prayer hall of the Laowang Mosque in Linxia City. There are around 5,000 - 6,000 followers attending this mosque. Close to 600 followers would come here for daily prayers and more than 2,000 would attend the weekly Friday Congregational Service Day.
2. Crystal spectacles are popular among the elderly Muslims in Linxia. However, such big-lens crystal spectacles are a rare sight now.
3. Besides conducting religious activities, the mosques and qubbas are also used for other social activities. Most of them conduct scripture classes and some even offer kindergarten classes and literacy classes for women. This picture shows the scripture school in Laowang Mosque.

The Three Sects and Four Saintly Lineages

There are three main sects (Qadim, Ikhwan and Salafiyya) and four main saintly lineages (Khufiyya, Qadariyya, Kubrawiyya and Jahriyya). There is not much difference between the different sects or between the different saintly lineages, except perhaps the difference in the location of religious activities or in the form of religious services.

However, the difference is more prominent between sects and saintly lineages. For instance, saintly lineages have another centre for religious activities besides the mosque, that is, the qubba. Qubba is a dome-shaped architecture, and it is regarded as the tomb of the saint. As the followers of saintly lineages worship their leader, they would build a qubba in his name after his death and hold memorials regularly. The qubba has hence become a symbol of saintly lineages.

We arrived at the largest Qadim mosque in Linxia City — the Laowang Mosque. Located at the centre of the Bafang District, it occupies a total area of 2,827 m² and comprises of



a prayer hall, Huanli hall, drawing room, lecture hall and classrooms. Its construction started in 1377, and it is the oldest Qadim mosque in China. We were there on a Friday and were just in time for the Congregational Service Day. The prayer hall was so fully packed with Muslims that some who had come later had to sit under the awning at the courtyard.

The Muslims take their Friday Congregational Service Day very seriously. Many of them had been waiting at the mosque long before the commencement of the service and there were no latecomers or early leavers throughout the entire service. The followers were all neatly dressed and wearing white caps while the Imam and Manla wore distinctive ceremonial caps. The prayer service was ceremonious, solemn and unified, which was both spiritually lifting and emotionally purifying.



Qubba — A Saint's Tomb

Located in the western suburbs of the Linxia City, approximately five kilometres away from Laowang Mosque, is the Great Qubba of the Qadariyya saintly lineage. It occupies a total area of around 8,000 m² while the building area covers almost 2,200 m². The main building, the tomb, is around 30 m high and is exquisitely designed. The base is decorated with wall carvings, and the 2nd and 3rd levels are constructed with traditional Chinese styled curve-ended wood. Great Qubba is the tomb of Qi Jingyi (1656 - 1719), founder of the Qadariyya saintly lineage, and was constructed in 1720. It underwent a major restoration in the 1980s and is currently the largest and most famous qubba in Linxia. Every year, more than 20,000 Muslims stream into Linxia to pay homage and take part in various memorial services here.

At the Qadariyya qubba, we saw around 20 Muslim monks. The oldest monk was 73 years old while the youngest was only 15 years old. They had all become monks on their own accord.

The monks enjoy great status within the qubba and take on roles as leaders. Their food, lodgings, retirement years and even burial would be provided for by the qubba. When a prestigious monk passes away, a mausoleum would even be built in his memory.

There are no affiliations between the various mosques or qubbas. Even if they belong to the same sect or saintly lineage, the mosques and qubbas conduct their own activities independently. A mosque is mainly managed by the Imam whom has been elected by the followers through the recommendations of the mosque committee, whereas a qubba is managed by the leader, whose position may have been hereditary or passed down. Some saintly lineages state that their leader must be a monk. The followers of different sects or saintly lineages may attend the service of other mosques but most followers of sects are not allowed to worship in a qubba.

The Five Pillars of Islam

At the Laowang Mosque, we were acquainted with Ma Yude, a 77 year-old Qadim follower. He is greatly respected by the locals as he is one of the few who have fulfilled the five pillars of Islam*: Shahada (Confession of Faith), Salat (Prayer), Zakat (Charity), Saum (Fasting) and Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca). Mr. Ma is not very tall, slightly hunchbacked, has big and deep-set blue eyes, a tall nose, fair skin, a five-inch long beard and a very kind face. He started attending the prayer service here since he was 12 years old and used to pray five times a day in the mosque. After his wife had passed away, plus the fact that he was also getting on in years, he only prayed three times a day at the mosque and the remaining two prayers would be done at home. He told us that most of the male Muslims would come here for two or three prayer services a day, and some elderly Muslims would even come for five prayer services. All male Muslims would attend the Friday Congregational Service Day. Mr. Ma had attended prayer services of other sects or saintly lineage's mosques and they, too, welcome those from other sects or saintly



The formation of the three main sects and four main saintly lineages in Linxia is primarily related to the extensive influx of immigrants from all the different regions. The origins of the Muslims here can be traced back to three main aspects: the xiyuren (people from the western regions) during the Song Dynasty, the captured Muslim soldiers and artisans during the Yuan Dynasty, and the immigrants during the Ming-Qing period.



*** Five pillars of Islam:** Pillars are the foundation of the religion. The five pillars of Islam include:

Shahada (Confession of faith): To declare that: "There is none worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is his Apostle."

Salat (Prayer): Salat is the name for the obligatory prayers, which are performed five times a day in the direction of the Mecca, and are direct links between the worshipper and God. For the Friday Congregational Service Day, Muslims assemble at the mosque in the afternoon for their prayer service. Muslims must cleanse themselves before prayer.

There would also be prayer services during Hari Raya Puasa and Hari Raya Haji.

Saum (Fasting): Every year, during the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar (Ramadan), all Muslims who have reached the age of puberty would fast from dawn until sundown, abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations with their spouses. If they see the new moon on the evening of the 29th day, the next day would be Hari Raya Puasa; if not, they would have to fast for another day.

Zakat (Charity): The annual payment of a fortieth of one's wealth to help those in need.

Haji (Pilgrimage to Mecca): The pilgrimage to Mecca is an obligation only for those who are physically and financially able to do so. One who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca would be given the title of Haji (for men) or Hajjah (for women).

However, some Islamic writings state that there are only four pillars of Islam (Confession of faith is classified under belief) while others state that there are six pillars of Islam (includes Jihad, the Holy War).

1. The Nanguan Mosque is the biggest mosque in Linxia City. Close to 800 followers would come here for daily prayers and more than 3,000 would attend the weekly Friday Congregational Service Day.
2. Most of the veils are made with silk or Dacron and in colours of green, blue and white. Generally, single girls would wear green veils, married women would wear blue veils and elderly women would wear white veils.
3. The 77 year-old Qadim follower, Ma Yude, is one of the few who have fulfilled the five pillars of Islam in Laowang Mosque.
4. The "Great Qubba" is the biggest qubba in Linxia City. Every year, more than 20,000 Muslims stream into Linxia to pay homage and take part in various memorial services here. The picture shows the tomb in the qubba.



lineages to attend their prayer services. Generally, in their daily activities, there is no difference between the different sects or saintly lineages. Intermarriage is allowed, and when a follower passes away, others may also attend his funeral at his mosque.

Mr. Ma also told us that all Qadim followers aim to fulfil the five pillars of Islam and many have spent their whole lives working towards their goal. The most exciting and emotional moment for Mr. Ma was when he performed the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, in 1993. He had applied for many years before he was granted approval, and had spent a total of ¥29,900 on his pilgrimage. Organised by the locals, more than 40 people had attended the annual pilgrimage together, which lasted for one and a half months. Many locals had applied for the pilgrimage but only one-tenth of them were granted permission.

The Arab Settlers

The origins of the Muslims in Linxia can be traced back to three main aspects. Firstly, Hezhou was an important stop along the ancient Silk Road and many Arab traders who had travelled through it for business during the Tang Dynasty had decided to settle down in the area. Along with the flourish of the Silk Road and Hehuang Road during the Song Dynasty, many Arab envoys were also sent into China in a mad rush and had settled down in Shannxi. Secondly, when Genghis Khan was making his expeditions in Central and West Asia during the 13th century, many Muslims were captured and recruited into their army. These captured soldiers finally settled down in Hezhou. Lastly, when the

Ming Dynasty General Mu Ying, a Hui nationality, was guarding Lintan and Hezhou, he recruited a large number of Hui people as soldiers to be stationed in Hezhou. There were already more than 110,000 Hui nationalities in Hezhou during the Qing Dynasty. Around 1850s, over 100,000 Hui nationalities from Shannxi, Ningxia and other Gansu regions moved into Hezhou. In 1895, more than 2,000 Hui nationalities were also forced to settle down in Hezhou. Hence, the formation of the three main sects and four main saintly lineages in Linxia is primarily related to the extensive influx of immigrants from all the different regions.

Majority of the Muslims in Linxia belong to the Hui ethnic group and the minority is made up of the Dongxiang, Bonan, Salar, Han and other ethnic groups. Generally, Han became Muslims through intermarriages. As the Muslim community is made up of different ethnic groups from different regions, their individual ethnic culture and traditions would inexorably influence their religion over the long span of time, which subsequently formed the foundation of the three main sects and four main saintly lineages. Throughout history, Linxia has been the choice location of many Arab missionaries who had travelled here along the Silk Road to spread the teachings of Islam. Some missionaries had even decided to settle down permanently in Linxia. Many local Muslims had made pilgrimages or gone overseas to study Islam in other Arabic countries through these missionaries.

Currently, Linxia is still one of the most impoverished regions in western China. Lacking in natural resources and plagued by wars and famine, the people of Linxia needed to seek spiritual strength through their religion. The long period of poverty and backwardness did not impede the growth of the sects and saintly lineages at all.

Distribution Centre for Tealeaves, Fur and Timber

Linxia is the biggest distribution centre for tealeaves, fur and timber in Northwest China, which relied much on the acute business sense of the local Muslims and its excellent geographical position. Throughout history, the region had been an important distribution centre and trading centre in the Gansu Province. During the Tang Dynasty, it was a strategic stop along the ancient Silk Road; during the Song

Dynasty, a government-run tea-horse trading centre was set up; and during the Ming Dynasty it gained the reputation as one of the four most famous tea-horse centres in the whole of China. Due to the lack of natural resources, the locals of Linxia had no other choice but to depend on trade for a living.

The local Muslims have a tradition of drinking tea and wearing fur products. Many can go without food for days but cannot go without tea for even one day. For gatherings,



become one of the ten biggest markets in Gansu.

The Sanjiaji Fur Trade Market within the Sanjiaji Town Centre is the biggest fur distributor in the province. It is an open-air market, occupying a total area of 15,000 m², near the Xidasi Mosque (the biggest mosque in Sanjiaji Town). Besides a small area is allocated for the sale of clothing and provisions, the rest of the area are allocated for the sale of fur products. We were there during a distribution day (which happens once every three days). The market was packed with various kinds of fur products. We were told that there are more than 1,000 individual fur traders here and the market covers products from Qinghai, Xinjiang, Tibet, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Sichuan, Yunnan, and even various countries such as Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

We also saw the biggest tea trade market in the province. Within the Fur Trade Market, there is a 500 m lane and stalls selling tea products occupied more than half the lane. Compared to the fur market, there are lesser traders here but there is a great range of tea products with different types of tea. According to statistics, the quantity of tealeaves sold annually is estimated to be almost 1,600 tn, which contributes about 20% of the total sales in the whole market.

The market trade in Linxia is different from the market trade at other places. The market operates on an extensive scale with numerous traders and the main products are tealeaves, fur and timber. Currently, it is the biggest distribution centre for tealeaves, fur and timber in Northwest China and is known as the "Hammation of the West".

a gift of tealeaves is a must and when entertaining guests, the first thing to be served should be tea. Tealeaves had become an item of necessity in each and every household. On another note, at a height of almost 2,000 m above sea level, the cold climate in Linxia had created a high demand for fur products. In addition, pure wool carpets are also in great demand from many Muslims and mosques. As for timber, it is used for the construction of grand mansions for the rich Muslims. The locals have a saying, "When a Han becomes rich, he buys gold bars; when a Hui becomes rich, he buys properties." As most of the locals still build their houses based on the conventional structure of timber and brick, it had created the great demand for timber. In addition, many new mosques have been built and old mosques restored in recent years, which further contributed to the demand for timber.

Reputed to be "The Best Distribution Centre in the Northwest", the Sanjiaji Market is located on the eastern part of Linxia, around 75 km away from Linxia City and Lanzhou City. With the Lan-Lang Highway passing through the town, the Sanjiaji Market, which is formed by 12 individual markets, has now

1. Bargaining is not conducted openly but rather, both buyer and seller would secretly feel the signal indicated by each other's hand, which could be hidden under their clothes, sleeves or other objects to block it from others' view. The locals call this "Tao Maque".
2. The wide variety of tea at the Linxia Tea Market is rarely seen at other places.
3. There are more than 1,300 stalls and 10,000 types of products in the Sanjiaji Market. The most number of people who had participated in the distribution day hit almost 20,000.





The exquisite art of brick carving and Hua'er of Linxia, which originated from Muslim culture, have become the tradition and culture of the locals, and have aroused the interests of many connoisseurs and scholars of the arts.

Being one of the oldest traders with the most quantity of tea, 48-year-old Ma Ersha is known as the "King of Tea". He started trading tea since 1973 and has been doing so for 31 years. In the beginning, he would take a train to Yunnan all by himself and carry back 40 kg of tea to sell in Lanzhou, from which he can earn ¥300. He had to do this stealthily as this was illegal during the earlier days. After the implementation of the market economy, he switched to transporting by train and could transport more than 100 kg each time. In 1988, he opened his own shop and concentrated on tea wholesale and retail business. Every day, he would open for business from 5 A.M. to midnight. Business was so good that he had to hire an employee to help out at the shop and his annual turnover is more than one million yuan. Recently, he even spent ¥120,000 and bought a 150 m² three-story building at Guanghe County. There are two shops downstairs which he intends to use for expansion of his business.



The Donggongguan Brick Carving Hall

The Muslims in Linxia like to buy properties and decorate them with brick carvings. According to records,

the art of brick carving originated from the Northern Song Dynasty, which flourished during the Ming Dynasty and were mostly used for decorating mosques, screen walls, corridor walls and porches. The brick carvings are created from a type of specially made soft green bricks from Linxia City, which are very suitable for carving as they are dense and neither too hard nor soft. Different brick carving techniques include line carving, high and low relief carving, and pierce carving. Common carvings are usually traditional items that symbolise good luck such as dragons, lotuses and peonies, or may follow a traditional lucky theme. You will be able to find many of the most famous brick carving works from the province at the Donggongguan, Beisi Mosque, Great Qubba and Hongyuan. There



are close to 100 brick carvers here and a majority are Muslims.

We decided to visit the Donggongguan and Beisi Mosque. Reputed as the “Biggest Hall of Brick Carving Art”, the Donggongguan is located at No. 35, Huancheng East Road and was originally the residence of the Deputy Commander-in-chief of the Kuomintang Northwest 40th Corps, Ma Buqing (1897 - 1977). It was built in 1945 and has a total of 189 brick carvings. The beautiful brick carvings, different in sizes with unusual designs, are all over the structures of the entire Donggongguan and absolutely represented the essence of brick carving art.

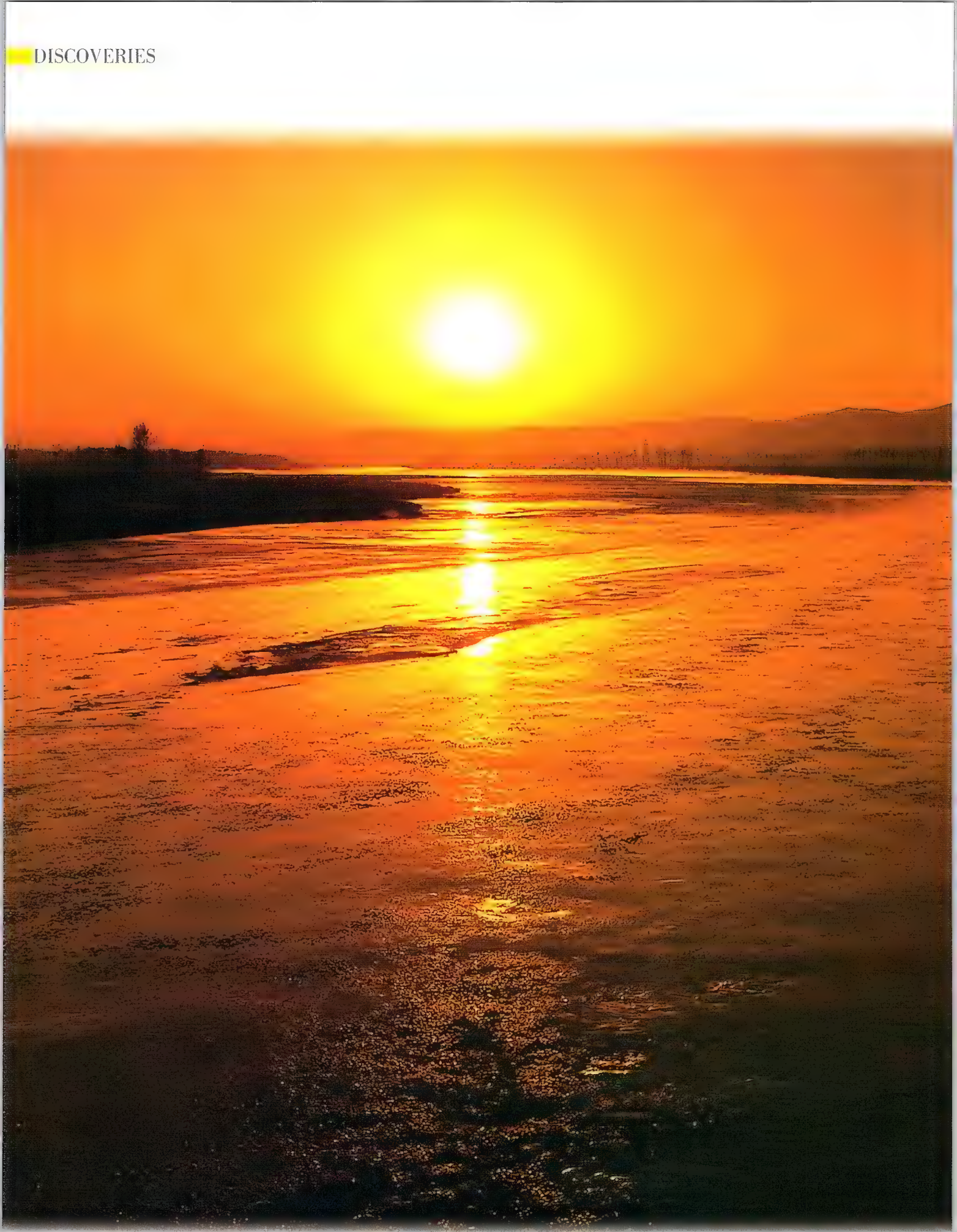
The Beisi Mosque, located at No.3 Beixiang, has one of the oldest brick carvings in Linxia — the “Mo Long San Xian”. The well-preserved brick carving, comprising three pieces, was done during the end of the Ming and beginning of Qing Dynasty, and is embedded on a 6 m by 12 m screen wall in front of the mosque.

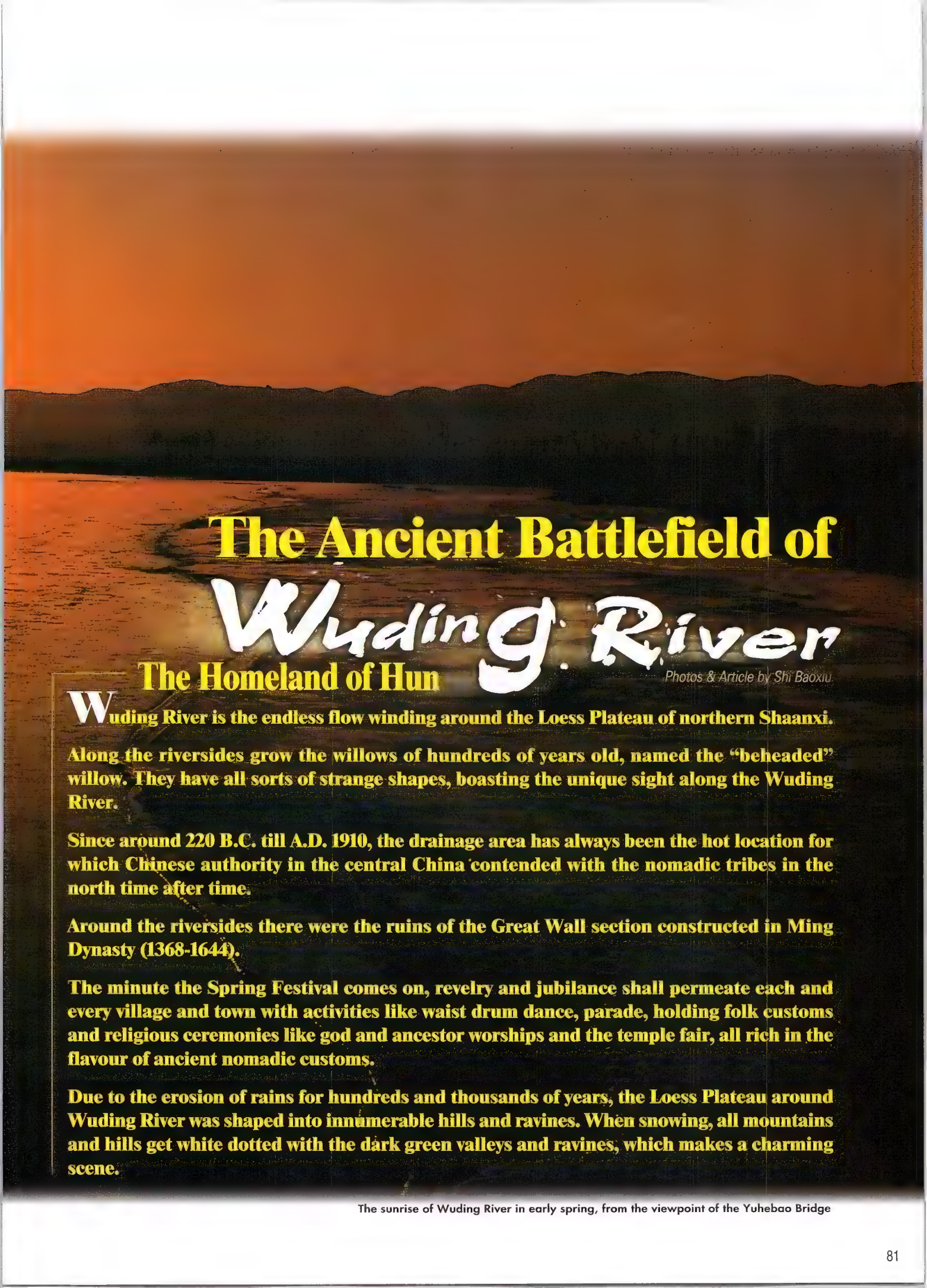
As I was leaving Linxia, accompanied by the sounds of prayers, images of rows and columns of Muslims kneeling and praying floated before me. To them, this is not only a religion. It is also their source of spiritual comfort and strength. It is with this spiritual comfort and strength that the people had built and developed their homeland.



1. The Songmingyan “Hua’er Festival” is one of the two biggest “Hua’er Festivals” in Linxia and is held every year on the 28th of the fourth month of the lunar calendar. Lasting between three to five days, the number of participants could range anywhere between 20,000 - 80,000 people. The highlights of the festival would be the “Hua’er” performance and singing competition.
2. Traditional food sold at the Songmingyan “Hua’er Festival”
3. The brick carvings are not only restricted to the structures within the mosque, but are also widely used on other structures such as houses and ethnic buildings.







The Ancient Battlefield of Wuding River

The Homeland of Hun

Photos & Article by Shi Baoxiu

Wuding River is the endless flow winding around the Loess Plateau of northern Shaanxi.

Along the riversides grow the willows of hundreds of years old, named the "beheaded" willow. They have all sorts of strange shapes, boasting the unique sight along the Wuding River.

Since around 220 B.C. till A.D. 1910, the drainage area has always been the hot location for which Chinese authority in the central China contended with the nomadic tribes in the north time after time.

Around the riversides there were the ruins of the Great Wall section constructed in Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The minute the Spring Festival comes on, revelry and jubilation shall permeate each and every village and town with activities like waist drum dance, parade, holding folk customs and religious ceremonies like god and ancestor worships and the temple fair, all rich in the flavour of ancient nomadic customs.

Due to the erosion of rains for hundreds and thousands of years, the Loess Plateau around Wuding River was shaped into innumerable hills and ravines. When snowing, all mountains and hills get white dotted with the dark green valleys and ravines, which makes a charming scene.

The sunrise of Wuding River in early spring, from the viewpoint of the Yuhebao Bridge

The Beheaded Willow

The willow, always waving to and fro with the wind, is commonly regarded to be too soft. However, the willows along the Wuding River actually grow stronger once being cut, showing the great vitality that people living here share.

It is this "beheaded" willow that impressed me greatly during the whole travel. I nicknamed it as such, for it is the very word that expresses the spirit of the willow there.

The willows along the Wuding River are neither the sweeping kind nor the sort of cluster willows that grow in sand, saying nothing of the rare chionese tamarisk. It belongs to the common hankow willow with upright branches. Though having been cut up to dozens of times, it shall again shoot out seven to eight twigs in spring.



After seven or eight years, the wattle grows into the stocky lumber and is to be cut. In this case, the more times it is cut, the more twigs it grows strongly.

Resilient Life Force

The people here are quite smart to avail themselves of land. Since it is uneasy to plant a tree, they figure that they shall allow trees to grow for as long as possible. At the same time, they cut branches for timbers. After the tree





grows for over one hundred years, the trunk becomes stocky and cannot be rounded with three arms. And the single great tree shall boast like a forest.

Furthermore, the cutting work creates a unique scenery. The moment we arrived around Leilong Gulf in the middle reaches of Wuding River, we were attracted by the “beheaded” willow.

Willows of grotesque shapes grew along the riverside, beside the village soil road and around the houses. Some

were overweighed with excessive grown crowns, and the trunk had cracked into three to five sections. Some willows of 50 years were at the prime time, and on the top of their stocky trunks radically grew more than 20 branches that were up to five metres long, each of which was as thick as a leg and could be used to make the rafter.

On the other hand, some willows became senile only with the hollow trunk, while a cluster of fresh sprays were still struggling out on the top. These sprays were only good for some wattles for making baskets in their remaining days. In Miaopan Village west to Leilong Gulf, I found such a senile tree only with the thin bark that was supported with a wood. However, but it still struggled to live. There were still some fresh twigs pressed out like chopsticks over the bark charred by lightening strike.

1. Many trees in the north shall die from water immersion, but the willow grows exuberantly with water.
2. Twigs growing after the branches of willow are cut are the top-grade material for interweaving household fitments.
3. There are quite a few several-hundred-year-old “beheaded” willows along the river.



The *Battlefield* of Nomadic Tribes and Han

For over two thousand years, the regions around Wuding River were the battlefield of the Han Chinese and the nomadic tribes in the north. All ceaseless battles and wars left numerous ruins of the cities.

The relic ancient city named the Tongwan City (City of Universal Unification), situated in the desert around the northern bank of Wuding River, is the witness of the wars. About 1,600 years ago Helian Bobo, King of Xia of the Sixteen Kingdoms (also a descendant of Hun), appreciated the place and constructed the capital there for five years, wishing that he would unify the country under his reign.

Unfortunately, the city was attacked by Northern Wei Dynasty in 427 and declined gradually thereafter. Since Song Dynasty carried out the decree of migration in 994,

the city eventually vanished in the history.

As a matter of fact, as early as 2,300 years ago, Hun had dominated northern China and was the headache to Emperor Qinshihuang and Emperor Hanwudi (140 B.C.- 87 B.C.). Until the reign of King Helian Bobo of Xia Dynasty, Hun, though becoming a spent arrow, still occupied the Ordos Plateau with the core of Wuding River. After the perdition of Xia, Hun gradually disappeared. Some were mixed into nationalities of Han, Qiang and Xianbei, while others migrated far off to Central Asia and Europe.

The Tongwan City is supposed to be the only Hun capital site in the world. After the perdition of Xia, the place was occupied by Xixia Dynasty and named Xiazhou, which became the headquarters of the war zone of Wuding River against Northern Song Dynasty. In Yuan Dynasty, Italian traveller Marco Polo made an exploratory search on spot.





The Royal City

We climbed up to the highest site, the southwestern ancient city, and had a general view on it.

According to the archaeologists, the city is composed of the palace, inner and outer cities. Inside the palace city holds the royal city, which is like a small-scale capital with splendid buildings.

However, the Mongolian army destroyed the city and there is only a section of the lofty wall and some base remnants of palace left today.

1. The remaining highest turret and frusta in the northeast of the Tongwan City (City of Universal Unification). The Xia Dynasty, which Helian Bobo wished lasting for thousands of years, just survived no more than 40 years. The rampart was tamped with the braised white clay with sticky rice extract. It is said that the supervisor had tested it with the iron pike. If the pestle cut in for one inch, he would kill the labourers. However, the tamped wall is still quite solid after over 1,600 years.
2. The Buoluo Ancient City once was the great city for the residence of army, political officials and masses. The high rampart was constructed along the mountain ridges and deep valleys. It is strategically located and difficult of access, overlooking the Wuding River.
3. The Great Wall in Hengshan County, which is the fortification against Oirats, descendant of Hun.



The *Luxurious* Cave Dwellings

There is a great manor on the barren Loess Plateau, which has the manner that is equal to that of the courtyard with building on the quadrangles of Beijing. The old castle with lofty bounding wall, which is seated against the cliff, is as strong as iron. Boasting the well and barn, it is able to support itself regardless of what happens outside.

Cave Dwellings of Mizhi County

Due to the abundant water supply of Wuding River, Mizhi County wins the reputation of producing the best rice. Donkey is another special product here, and donkey bacon and sausage are the best local snacks.

Large Family with the Wall of a Dozen Metres

After driving for 10 km, we entered into the desolate and hilly village in the valley. I found that the residents of the middle and lower reaches of Wuding River all constructed their cave dwellings on the mountainside. After reaching the village, we rounded several houses brimming happy air of Spring Festival and arrived under the foot of a small-scale castle called Jiang's Family Residence. It featured the wall of a dozen metres high, the base of bluestone and the blue brick body with battlements on the top of the wall.

The compound was composed of two courtyards. The quadrangle downstairs was the private school launched by the Jiang's family. The residential quarter upstairs was made up of two courtyards. The front consisted of the mews, the milling house and the lodging for guests and servants. There was a stone groove of two metres long across the front of the mews. The back constructed upon the stage was the dwelling of master with great cave houses, which had the manner equal to the quadrangle of Beijing.





The host Jiang Chunzhe invited us inside. His great grandfather accumulated the family property with the business of millet. At that time, there were so many gangsters in north Shaanxi that rich families were often plundered. Thus, his great grandfather found the lap outside the village and built the castle with careful design.

The construction of the building began in 1886 and was completed in 1900. Later on, the great grandfather and his

son founded a private school in the lower courtyard, offering free education to all the village children.

Having the Meal in the Castle

The host's son guided us to the upside of the castle. We found a deep well in the courtyard that could supply enough water for two to three months. We came out of the back door and reached the top, finding that the hillside was also enclosed with the tall solid wall with cliff and deep valley in three sides. It was by no means easy to attack from the back hill.

Around the hillside there were many peach and plum trees with blossom buds. It must be wonderful to stay in the castle in spring. 

1. The old residence with the quadrangle in the Xiangshui Ancient City, which was constructed in late Qing Dynasty.
2. Layers and layers of cave dwellings round the mountain, which are visible everywhere in the middle and lower reaches of Wuding River.
3. Jiang's Family Residence is situated near the highroad from Mizhi County to Jiaxian, which is the castle manor with complete and solid defense establishments like a fortress.



Hills Covered with the Boundless Desert

Hundreds and thousands of years ago, the loess plateau where the river flows was the limestone hill terrain, which belongs to the Jurassic or Carboniferous. Since certain time the strong northern wind has swept the sand from the Gobi Desert upon this very area and rained down aflutter and piled the limestone hills into the thick loess plateau.

The loess landform is distributed around different global regions, among which China covers the thickest area in the highest location, and the most extensive (about 5% of the total loess area in the world). For example, the loess of Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia is of 100-200 m thick, while that of others is just about 20-50 m.

Chinese Loess Plateau covers the west of Shanxi, north of Shaanxi, north of the Great Bend of Yellow River in Inner Mongolia, middle and eastern areas of Gansu and southern Ningxia. It covers a total area of 0.4 million m².

Vanished Hun



Hun was the most powerful one among northern nomadic tribes in ancient China. They regularly went on an expedition southward, which even worried the two greatest emperors of Qin and Han Dynasty, namely Emperor Qinshihuang and Hanwudi. The valiant tribe once invaded through Europe at its prime time, finally vanished in the history.

According to some scholars, the Hungarian are in fact the descendants of Hun, for their appearances are obviously different from other European and their folk songs are similar to those of north Shaanxi and Shanxi of China.



1. The rock painting showing the hunting scene of Huns
2. The tomb figure of the cavalry soldier with a halberd indicating that the army of Han Dynasty defeated the north Hun.



The qiangkong gulf in the lower reaches of Wuding River



Travel Tips

By Plane: Hong Kong → Xi'an; Shenzhen → Xi'an
Guangzhou → Xi'an; Xi'an → Yulin

By Train:

No. 7552 regular fast train:

Xi'an 8:22 → Yan'an 16:49 → Suide 20:02 → Mizhi 20:27 → Yulin 21:42

No. 4762 regular fast train:

Xi'an 22:10 → Yan'an 7:00 → Suide 9:30 → Mizhi 10:10 → Yulin 11:25

Please contact the business center of the guesthouse or the travel agency nearby for booking the ticket. You can also buy the ticket in the ticket outlets or the station.

By Bus:

Limousine bus from Xi'an to Yulin with the fare of ¥128. Timetable: 7:30, 8, 8:30, 9, 9:30 in the morning.

The coach for north Shaanxi departs from the Chengdong Depot.

Address: No. 103 Changlezhong Rd. Dongjiao, Xi'an.

You can also take the bus in the bus station near Xi'an Railway Station, where many limousine buses are available.

Travel Reminders

1. If setting off from Xi'an, you may cross Yellow River to Shanxi from Yulin, Shenmu and Fugu after finishing the travel of Wuding River. You may also travel to Datong, south to Pingyao Ancient City in Shanxi, or return to Taiyuan or Beijing. You do not need to return to Xi'an.

2. Take enough clothes, shoes, caps and gloves, for it is quite cold in north Shaanxi in January of the lunar calendar. The temperature in morning and evening usually drops to about -20°C.

3. Note that you should take the cold resistant batteries and hide the camera in the warm clothes the minute you take the picture in the field.

4. Chinese dates of varieties are the most noted local product, which is available in any town and in Xi'an. The millet, soybean and mung bean are also quite fine, especially from the villagers.

5. The food of north Shaanxi mainly involves the mutton and noodles. You may also advise the restaurant to cook the food with pork or chicken especially if you like. The rice from Wuding River is of high quality. If you have the meal in some villager's house, you may beg him to cook some local food like pickle, rice wine, fried bun, pastry, sweet rice cooked with broom corn millet, braised yam food and bean noodles, etc.



The completely iced Wuding River in winter

Tour in Shenzhen by Metro



Photos & Article by Walia

Metro of Shenzhen is open!

From now on Hong Kong citizens can have easy access to downtown Shenzhen through Luohu Customs. They need not to wait in long queues for taxi or get caught in traffic jam any more. It used to take more than one hour to go from Luohu District to the popular tourist attraction Miniature Window of the World, but it needs only 25 minutes now. The new Metro intersects with Shennan Garden & Flower Expo (Zhuzilin Stop). With an area of 66 ha, the Garden & Flower Expo (Yuanbohui) boasts a permanent theme park of more than 100 classical gardening scenic spots built by exhibitors at home and abroad. The theme park includes a vast array of classical gardening styles over the world. It is given a pertinent title "Name Cards of City Gardens" collected in Shenzhen.

Along the metro's route are a host of major amenities of Shenzhen. Take the Metro and enjoy everything!



Miniature Window of the World

(Miniature Window of the World Stop)

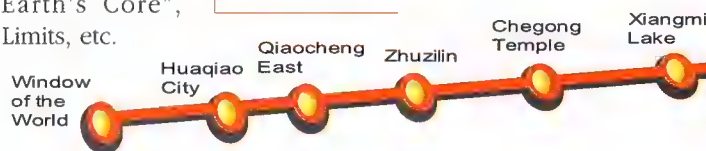
As a miracle of artificial tourist areas in China, Miniature Window of the World persistently promotes new attractions for tourists across the globe. It has set up a series of scenic spots with new themes and increased the number of its scenic spots to more than 130. The newly developed scenic spots include the first large-scale indoor ski run in China, drifting adventure on the "Grand Canyon", shuttle tour across "Amazon forests", Mount Fuji Digital Cinema, Pyramid Fantasy Museum, Jurassic Dinosaurs' World, Expedition to "Earth's Core", Challenge of Your Limits, etc.



Garden & Flower Expo

(Zhuzilin Stop)

With an area of 66 ha, the Garden & Flower Expo (Yuanbohui) boasts a permanent theme park of more than 100 classical gardening scenic spots built by exhibitors at home and abroad. The theme park includes a vast array of classical gardening styles over the world. It is given a pertinent title "Name Cards of City Gardens" collected in Shenzhen.



Travel Tips

Operation Time: Monday-Sunday

6:30 a.m.-11:00 p.m.; 15 min every shift

Ticket Price: Shenzhen Metro adopts the section-by-section system for collecting fees. Every two stops next to each other are one subsection and four such subsections are one section. The preliminary price is ¥2 for 3 subsections and only another ¥1 is needed for any other stop in the same section.

Ticket Sales:

1. Single ticket: There are three to four ticket vending machines (TVM) on the passengers' floor at each stop. The TVM accept coins and paper currency. The single ticket for Shenzhen metro is a green or yellow coin.

2. Please apply to the ticket sales and information office for the stored-value card (e.g. Metro Card). Each card needs a deposit of ¥40. The Metro Card can operate on the automatic prepaid machine. Each operation of prepaying must be the multiple of ¥50. There is also a ticket office on the passengers' floor at each stop, where passengers can buy the single ticket or value-storing ticket, or prepay for the Metro Card.

3. The previous Shenzhen Bus Card can be used for the metro system. Meanwhile, the prepaid ticket for the metro can also be used for any buses with Shenzhen Bus Card System.





Lianhuashan Park

(Children's Palace Stop)

Lianhuashan Park occupies an area of 166.14 ha (including 60 ha open to visitors). The Park is environmental friendly, natural, and harmonious. On the square atop the hill stands the bronze statue of Mr. Deng Xiaoping. Lianhuashan Park is the most commodious among parks in Shenzhen. Its summit is an ideal place for a bird's-eye view of downtown Shenzhen and attracts many interested tourists and photographers. The 80,000-m² spacious lawn in the coconut forest displays splendid tropical and subtropical scenery. The 30 000-m² artificial lake is lined with luxuriant trees. The 160,000-m² kite square forms an eye-catching cultural event in Shenzhen.



CITIC City Square

(Science Museum Stop)

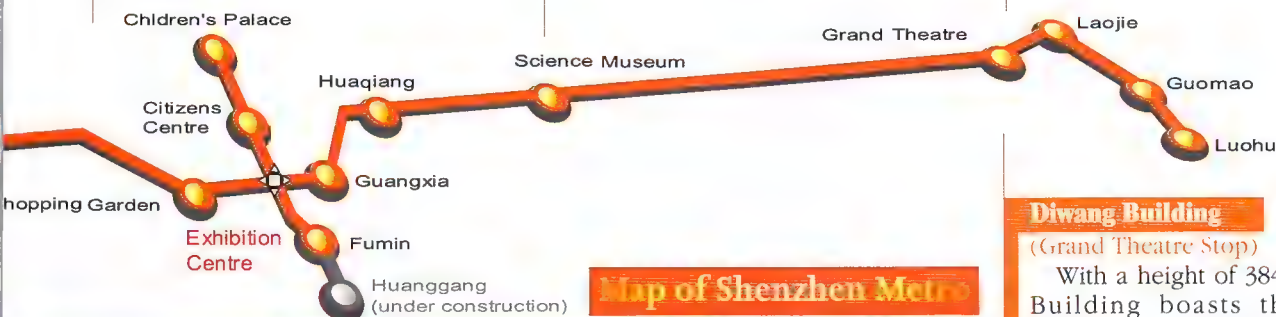
CITIC City Square on Shennan Road of Shenzhen occupies an area of 51000 m² and it looks like a large sailing ship. It has become one of the landmark buildings in Shenzhen in recent years. Inside the Square is a full range of shopping, recreational and entertaining utilities, such as Jusco Department Store, Seibu Department Store, Starbucks, Pizza Hut, etc.



MixC Mall

(Grand Theatre Stop)

MixC Mall boasts the largest shopping centre in Shenzhen and is similar to the Festival Walk in Hong Kong. It started its business at the end of 2004. MixC Mall has six floors for shopping and two Metro floors with a total of over 300 famous shops and large supermarkets. Also located in MixC Mall are the first Shenzhen skating rink up to Olympic standards and the first Golden Harvest Cinema (Theatre) in Shenzhen.



Metro Transportation Service:

1. Passengers enter the metro station and slide their tickets before the access machine before they can get on the metro. The single ticket is valid only when it is used in the day of selling and at the same stop. The general prepaid card has a period of validity of 10 years. A term of 360 days is given to the prepaid cards of students, and the free tickets of the senior citizens and the handicapped. The time limit is 120 minutes for each passenger each time from the access machine to the exit machine. If it takes more than the time limit, the top single ticket price will be deducted (The prepaid tickets of pupils or middle school students will be deducted by half the top single ticket price).

2. Provided any passenger lose the ticket inside the fee collecting area, he or she should buy another ticket at the top price of single ticket at the ticket sales and information office of the station and pay extra ¥10 as the cost of ticket production. If the registered prepaid cards, prepaid tickets of students, and the free tickets of the senior citizens and the handicapped are lost, the owners of the cards or tickets should report to the ticket sales and information office of the metro station and apply for new cards or tickets.

Note: Shenzhen metro provides a toilet for every stop, but it is designed for urination only.

Diwang Building

(Grand Theatre Stop)

With a height of 384 m, Diwang Building boasts the highest building in Shenzhen. On its top floor is a round scenic spot called Window of Shenzhen & Hong Kong, where you can have an amazing bird's-eye view of the main buildings in Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The Window of Shenzhen & Hong Kong includes a series of utilities for entertainment (e.g. mobile film, robot tour guide, sky website, air flight), shopping and catering. Among them the most representative are the wax statues of the former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.





THE REVIVAL OF A FORGOTTEN VILLAGE SUJIAWEI

Photos & Article by Waliya

Sujiawei, situated in Heyuan City, Guangdong Province, is a legend. Like many poor areas, people here do not have money to reconstruct their old houses. Yet, what left by poverty has now become tourist resources.

Sujiawei lives the descendants of Su Dongpo, the famous writer in Northern Song Dynasty. The Hakka architecture is well preserved here. Every brick and lane, or even the slogan written on the walls, tells their own story.



I'm planning a two-day excursion for the weekend and my friend recommended Sujiawei of Heyuan, which is three-hour drive from Shenzhen.

In A.D. 1295, Su Tianrong, the seventh-generation descendant of Su Dongpo, has been transferred from Jiangxi to Guangzhou. He passed Sujiawei by water and had a dream, in which he saw five old men and a big tree. The old men said, "The tree is so big because it gets the right earth."

After landing, he found a big banyan and a Five-Wisdom temple, just like what happened in the

dream. Therefore, he intended to settle here after retirement.

He was later promoted to Sichuan however. Before leaving, he told his family about his dream. In A.D. 1381, Su Xiuhong, fourth-generation grandson of Su Tianrong held a post in Guangdong and returned again.

The beautiful environment was just like what his ancestors said, so he purchased some lands and settled here. After 28 generations, the descendants of Su Dongpo are still living in Sujiawei today.

Declining Village Turned Scenic Spot

600 years passed, the little village has declined in late Qing Dynasty. The village was suffering from poverty that people left to work in the city. In 1982, there were still 820 villagers, but there are only 224 left now.

Thanks to poverty, old houses are all preserved nowadays, since no one can afford reconstruction. Sujiawei's luck takes a turn for the better. Two years ago, an investment of three million yuan was funded by a tourism development project.



3

The villagers, who once left because of economic hardship, come back. The rich bring money to invest in tourism. People who miss their hometown also return.

When I arrived, more than 300 photographers were gathered around the bridge in the village, while tour buses and visitors were flowing in. Photographers walked around the old houses and deep lanes, and visitors listened to the guides with a face full of interest.

1. The seventh-generation descendants of Su Dongpo lived here and six centuries have passed until now. (by Huang Yanhong)
2. Sujiawei has a beautiful environment and just like a pastoral.
3. Photographers finding inspiration
4. Yingqing Bridge is the best place to view the whole village.



4



Cultural Relic Preserved

The Yingqing (Bride-Receiving) Bridge, where has a panoramic view of Sujiawei, is the first spot you encounter. The old houses are built by mixed brick, wood and stone. Most of them are in two complexes, each of which consists of three parts and one dooryard. The houses are in square shape, which looks like noble houses in Ming and Qing dynasties.

Climbing up to the hill, you will

find 19 earth buildings, which look slightly disordered. Yet, you will find a drainage system running through all of them. This drainage system can even survive heavy rain.

Yongsi Hall, also named Dongshan Sugong Temple, is the oldest construction. It was built in 1481 in memory of Su Dongshan, eight-generation ancestor of Sujiawei. It is the place for villagers to worship and discuss official business. The main hall

has three buildings, and there is no main door but only two side-doors. This is a typical Hakka style building.

We find three old carved boards in another Songgong Ancestral Temple. There were originally 63 pieces of ancient carved boards, but were destroyed during the Culture Revolution. By chance, a villager took two of them back home and used them as a bed. He had never thought that he had protected a cultural relic.

Slogans Tell Stories

Except beautiful scenery, old houses and ancient lanes, you can also find something out of expectation —





slogans written on the walls!

Here are some slogans: "Crack down the landlords and get the fields", "The thoughts of Chairman Miao is the root of our soul", "American imperialist and all the reactionaries are paper tigers", "Rebellion is right", and "Building socialism with Chinese characteristics". There are more than 30 slogans all over the village. They are just like a lesson on contemporary Chinese history.

There is a creative exhibition: Hakka idea on love, sex and marriage. It shows female inferiority in traditional Hakka value. For example, for bathing, men use wooden barrel and women use wooden basin. Also, when hanging the washed clothes, men's clothes should always be on top. When a boy is born, a "heaven lantern" will be hanged, since male are believed to be born with superiority.

Outside the museum, there is a man selling pawpaws. "Pawpaw old man", a name given by the local, is a pawpaw farmer. No one comes to buy pawpaw before, but now it is a best-loved souvenir — especially when they are planted by an 80-year old man!

Scholars of Sujiawei

Sujiawei had its golden days in history.

In the times of the 11th generation of the Su's, the village is rich; while in the times of the 18th generation, all children attended school. Being the descendants of Su Dongpo, attending school and then serving the country are important. Dongshan School was built in the 16th century, and later 10 schools were built. During Ming and Qing dynasties, there were 100 Sujiawei scholars who passed the

imperial exam. In a county examination conducted during Daoguang reign (1821-1850) of Qing Dynasty, 12 scholars out of 24 were from Sujiawei.

In the past decades, due to economic hardship, the people here are not so well educated as their ancestors were. Walking by the lake, you will find groups of children singing folk songs to visitors. Visitors are often touched by them. Some visitors put money into the donation box written "donate to help students".

Later, children only sing to visitor during school holiday, and all the money are strictly used for education.

Tourism the Big Business

Su Runguo is the 25th generation of Su's family, who knows everything about Sujiawei. He was once a teacher, but had left the village to start his business in 1980s. When tourism was introduced three years ago, the villagers invited him as the director of the travelling office.

I met Su Runguo when I learned about the family tree of the Su's. He drew the family tree, starting from Su Dongpo, then generation by generation. Two pieces of paper were full very soon.

1. Located on the bank of Dongjiang River, Sujiawei becomes a new attraction.
2. The slogans on the wall tell history.
3. Village kid
4. The exhibition hall

Travel Tips

Transportation: There are daily buses to Heyuan in Shenzhen Luohu Bus Station. The journey is 3 hours. Sujiawei is 27 km away from Heyuan and you can go there by bus. Two-star hotels (or above) have tourist buses to Sujiawei every Sunday morning. It will be more convenient if you drive your own car. The road toll for the 160 km journey is ¥55.

Accommodation: Four-star hotel: ¥300

Three-star hotel: ¥230

Two-star hotel: ¥160

Dongpo Shifu (Restaurant) is highly recommended. The rooms are clean and it only cost ¥40 for one room.

Food: Hakka Leicha tea is a traditional drink, you will find it sweet and delicious. Sweet potato rice and potherb are the most favourite food in the restaurant of Sujiawei. You can also try the organic chicken raised in the village. The foods in Dongpo restaurant are very delicious. You can try Hakka stuffed bean curd, Hakka river fish and loquat leaf dragon-bone soup.

Admission fee: ¥15

Recommendations: If you have enough time, you can have a two-day tour covering Wanlu Lake, Guishan scenic spot.





The Beer and German Architecture in Qingdao

Photos by Hou Heliang

Article by Anita Yeung



Many of my friends who have been to Qingdao would say: If only I could live in Qingdao. Indeed, Qingdao is an ideal place to reside for its rugged and winding streets, flanked with rows of historic red-tiled houses and beautiful greenery, offer a breathtaking sight which would definitely lift one's spirits.

I wasn't expecting much from the Qingdao trip when I was making my way there in mid October. Since the beginning of our journey, regardless of whether we were in the Jinan or Weifang "The City of Kites", the air was heavily polluted and it had greatly dampened our spirits. I supposed that even though Qingdao may have its colonial charms, it would be marred by the absence of the clear blue skies.

Qingdao has gained quite a reputation for its beer. It situated on the southern side of the Jiaodong Peninsula in Shandong Province, it overlooks the Yellow Sea on its east and is bordered by the Jiaozhou Bay on its west. Surrounded by the sea on all sides, the pollution particles in the atmosphere were easily dispersed by the ocean breeze. Slowly making our way into the boundaries of the Qingdao City on the bus, I caught my first glimpse of a clear blue sky. My first impression of Qingdao was hence formed, and it was an excellent one.

1. In summer, Qingdao is invaded by surfers
2. The No.1 Bathing Beach in Qingdao



Stumbled into an European Town

As our taxi made its way towards the seaside tourist resort, an amazing transformation took place: the streets became clean and narrow, big trees gradually appeared on both sides of the road, and blocks of two-storey high traditional European-styled villas peeked out from behind the trees. We felt as if we had suddenly stumbled into a rustic European town. Needless to say, this has got to be Qingdao's famous Badaguan Resort.

I have long heard of the beautiful scenery at Badaguan but was pleasantly surprised to find that it is also a haven of serenity. There were only the chirping sounds of birds and the gentle whisper of the wind. With its beautiful landscape and quaint European charms, it is no wonder that Badaguan is also a popular venue for wedding photography. A group of couples, clad in wedding gowns and suits, had gathered here for their wedding photography this afternoon. Sitting quietly on the grass patch and tucking into their lunch packs, the couples whispered as they carried out their conversation. It seems as if everyone had a tacit agreement, that is, to not disrupt the tranquillity here.

Wilfully, we chose to walk along the boulevard near to Huashilou. The virtually traffic-free road made us feel well away from the clamour of the city. The main roads at Badaguan are all tree-lined with different species of trees. For example, the Jiayuguan Road is lined with maple trees while the Juyongguan Road is lined with ginkgo trees. Although we may have come during the wrong season and missed seeing the flower blossoms and falling leaves, the motley assortment of trees was still a sight to behold.

1. Qingdao has become a popular venue for wedding photography
2. A boy working on a nature painting in front of the guesthouse
3. The tree-lined avenues of Badaguan create an ambience of serenity and tranquillity (by Anita Yeung)
4. A panoramic view of Qingdao



Their Unrelenting Ways

In November 1897, Germany occupied Jiaozhou Bay and gathered architecture experts to design a "German flavour" city development plan for Qingdao. The vicinity around Zhongshan Road was developed as the "Europe City Proper" where offices of government organisations, the Governor's Residence, churches, fire stations, were all congregated, while Badaguan was developed into a "Convalescence Resort". Only foreigners were allowed into these two areas.

With strict standards laid down by the colonial authorities, Qingdao was developed into a European-styled city in a matter of a few years. Although Germany had withdrawn her troops 17 years later (in 1914) after losing the war, the sophisticated German-styled architecture along Zhongshan Road remained as a backbone of the city. Badaguan, following the foundation laid down by the Germans, became a residential area for foreigners and blocks of western-styled villas hence sprouted in succession.

It is not difficult to imagine that had the people of Qingdao decide to tear down all buildings, today's Qingdao would have become a city of skyscrapers. A German architecture historian (Christoph Lind) once commented that Qingdao has even more German flavour than Germany itself. This is certainly a pride of the locals. A few years ago, the Qingdao authorities had even legislated that all buildings that are three storeys high and below must be fitted with a red roof. This may be seen as a move to increase Qingdao's "tourism resources", but isn't it also a move to preserve the German architectural style?

After visiting the granite-built ancient mansion Huashilou, we moved on to the No. 2 Bathing Beach. As it was still early, we decided to take a stroll along the boardwalk towards the Zhanqiao Pier. Qingdao has been set as the venue for the 2008 Olympics Sailing Competition and its government is specially constructing a 40 km long

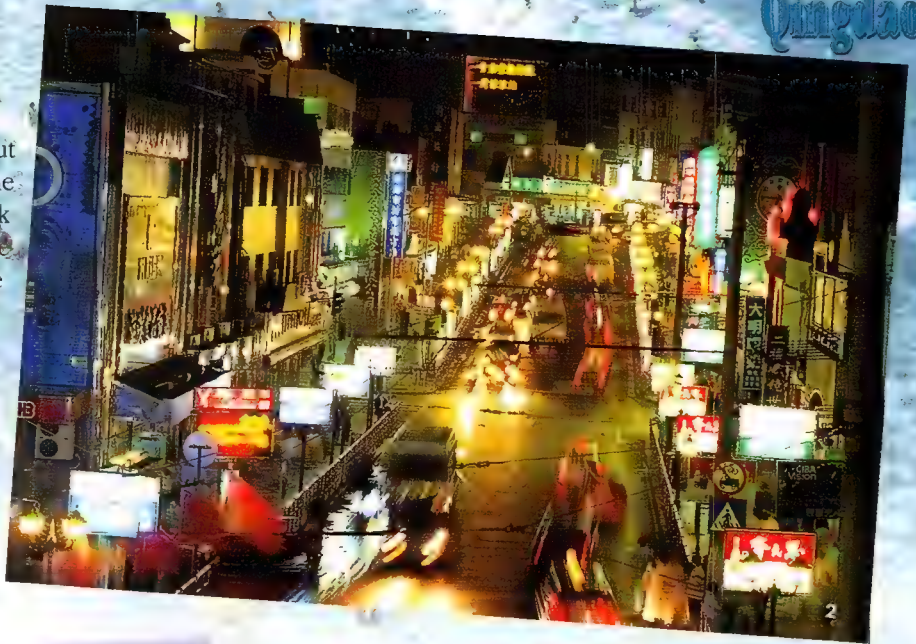




boardwalk along its coast. It would take about one day to walk around the entire stretch. The locals adore this beach. They love to walk their dogs, take a jog. The environment of the city certainly had stealthily moulded the nature of their people.

The Sea View from Zhanqiao Pier

By the time we reached the Zhanqiao Pier, it was almost sunset. Zhanqiao Pier, a symbol of Qingdao, was made famous by its use on Tsingtao beer labels. Perhaps that is why the place was totally packed with people.



We walked from Zhanqiao Bridge to Huilan Pavilion at the end of Zhanqiao Pier and found our own leaning spot along the railings to look out to the Yellow Sea. Looking out, not far right was the Little Qingdao. We could clearly see the white lighthouse on the isle, which is the main navigation mark for ships entering Jiaozhou Bay. The sea was calm and peaceful, save for the few speedboats that past by carrying visitors. In the far distance, we could see the faint silhouette of mountains and ships in the ocean. We were so absorbed in the beautiful scenery that we had forgotten the crowd and clamour around us. Indeed, Zhanqiao Pier is a perfect place where one can maintain his own private space and communicate with the sea in his own private ways.

The next morning, we climbed up to the Xiaoyushan Park for a panoramic view of Qingdao. After that, we visited some of the famous European-styled architecture such as the Christian Church, St. Michael's Cathedral, the Governor's Office (currently the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee's Office), the former German Governor's Residence (currently a guesthouse), the former residence of Kang Youwei, etc. The guesthouse, which looks very much like a cottage from the cover of a storybook, still looks brand new from outside. Under the shining sun, it looks exceptionally magnificent and I was absolutely marvelled by it. I must say this is probably the most brilliant work of art left behind in Qingdao by the Germans.

1. The Zhanqiao Pier — a symbol of Qingdao
2. A night scene of Qingdao (by Shan Xiaogang)
3. The view of St. Michael's Cathedral from a distance (by Shan Xiaogang)





Excellent Brew Enjoyed from Plastic Bags

In the afternoon, we visited the Qingdao Tsingtao Beer Museum. The Beer Museum is a must-visit as beer is an integral part of people's lives. The locals drink freshly brewed beer like a soft drink, straight from plastic bags with straws — a display only seen in Qingdao. Interestingly, the history of Tsingtao Beer is an epitome of the history of Qingdao.

The Tsingtao Brewery was founded in 1903. The current location of the museum (56 Dengzhou Road) was the site of the original brewery. Initially, the brewery was named Germanic Beer Company and was the earliest brewery to be established in China. All their production equipment

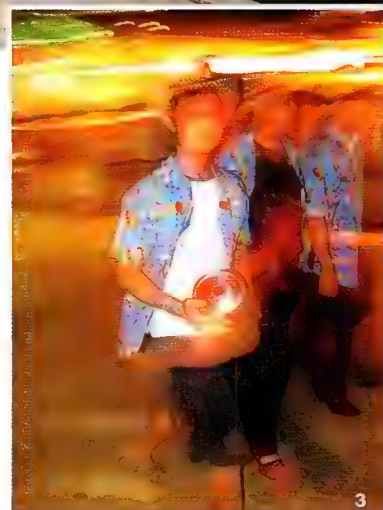


and raw materials were imported from Germany then. After World War I in 1914, the Japanese occupied Qingdao. In 1916, after the brewery was bought over by the Japanese Dai Nippon Beer Company for five hundred thousand silver dollar, they switched to using Japanese malt for their brew and

produced labels such as Kirin, Tsingtao and Asahi. After the May Fourth Movement, Qingdao was returned to China and the brewery was renamed Tsingtao Brewery.

Having been through the German and Japanese occupation periods, the people of Qingdao have acquired both the German and the Japanese's secrets of a successful brew. Tsingtao Beer, brewed using the finest imported barley and beer flower, and pure spring water from Laoshan over a 50-day fermentation process, is one of the top three famous beers in the world. To the locals, it is not only a label but also a symbol of their success after years of hardship. Perhaps, this is why the Qingdao Beer Museum is one of the rare few museums in China I have seen that has been established with a genuine conscientious effort.

The museum has become a must-visit itinerary for many tour groups. The first section was the "Hundred Years of History Exhibition Area" where historical treasures such as old photographs, brewery equipment, and black and white documentary, told the history of Tsingtao Beer. The





"Manufacturing Process" section exhibited the brewing process of beer in the olden days and allowed us to take a peek into the manufacturing process at the current brewery. Tired from all the walking, we took a break at the bar to savour their freshly brewed unfiltered beer, which was exceptionally sweet and satisfying.

1. The statue of Dionysus, the God of Wine, in front of the Qingdao Beer Museum (by Anita Yeung)
2. Qingdao Sculpture Park
3. The annual beer festival is a time for fun and celebration. (by Lee Yalong)
4. The ladies at the beer festival
5. Merry drinking at the beer festival (by Lee Yalong)
6. The old TV commercials for Tsingtao beer shown at the museum comically featured ancient people drinking beer. (Anita Yeung)
7. The Qingdao Dolphin Park (Courtesy of Qingdao Tourism Board)

Travel Tips

Getting there: Qingdao is very well connected through a well-developed transport infrastructure. There are direct flights to Qingdao from main cities of China and Tokyo and Singapore. Travelling by land, you can choose to travel either by train or the long distance bus. Linked to other cities by the highway, there are frequent buses shuttling between Qingdao and these cities.

Accommodation: If you wish to take a tour around the European-styled architecture in the old city proper, it is best to stay in Qingdao Hotel (3-star), located at No. 53 Zhongshan Road. For a panoramic view of Qingdao from your hotel room, you may stay at Huanghai Hotel (3-star) next to the Xiaoyushan Park. During the peak tourist period in July and August, hotel room charges would be much higher.



Qingdao Beer Museum

Address: No. 56 Dengzhou Road, Qingdao City

Opening hours: 9:00—16:30

Admission: 50 yuan (includes a tour and beer tasting)

Qingdao International Beer Festival

Date of event: 17 August—September annually

Venue: Qingdao International Beer City (Shilaoren National Holiday Resort, Zhanliugan Road North)

Online Travel Information

<http://www.sd-china.com/qilu/qingdao/>; <http://www.qdtravel.com/>;

<http://www.qingdao-china.org/>; <http://www.0532.com/>

A FAMILY OF THE NORTHEASTERN CHINA

Photos & Article by Wang Fuchun



Yangge Dance of the Northeastern China

The Yangge dance is created by farmers of the Northeastern China during sowing and harvest seasons. The song-and-dance duet reflects the cream of folk customs, which is popular both in urban and rural area.

I am a native of the Northeastern China and have a deep attachment to the black land.

Having been living in the city for so long, I come to miss my hometown more with each passing day. I often dream about my childhood moments: hunting fowls in the forest, catching katydid in the grasses, and swimming and catching fish in the river.

The memories of home come vividly in my mind: the earth wall pasted with newspaper near the bed of the thatched cottage, the giant burner, tobacco pipe, wadded jacket, cotton-padded trousers, dog skin cap, cow skin shoes, freezing dumplings, sticky steamed bun stuffed with sweetened bean paste, noodles cooked with pork....



Immigrants to the Northeastern China

Since there are many fertile lands with little population in the village of Northeastern Region, many people from Shandong Province would immigrate here. They make a living by farming in the wasteland, hunting and picking ginseng. Immigrants from Shandong and Hebei provinces account for 70 to 80% of the population in the region. These people are hardworking, brave, upright and hospitable.

Whenever facing the fellow countrymen, I am deeply impressed with their kindness and warmth and my dense nostalgia is aroused. I pay a visit to every family from door to door and take the picture for them. These photos record the attractions of the Northeastern China, which live permanently in my mind.

My First Impact by Photography

In February 1987, I visited the Gaohe Village of Weishahe Township, Ruixian County, 170 km from Harbin. It is the poor village without the electricity and highway.

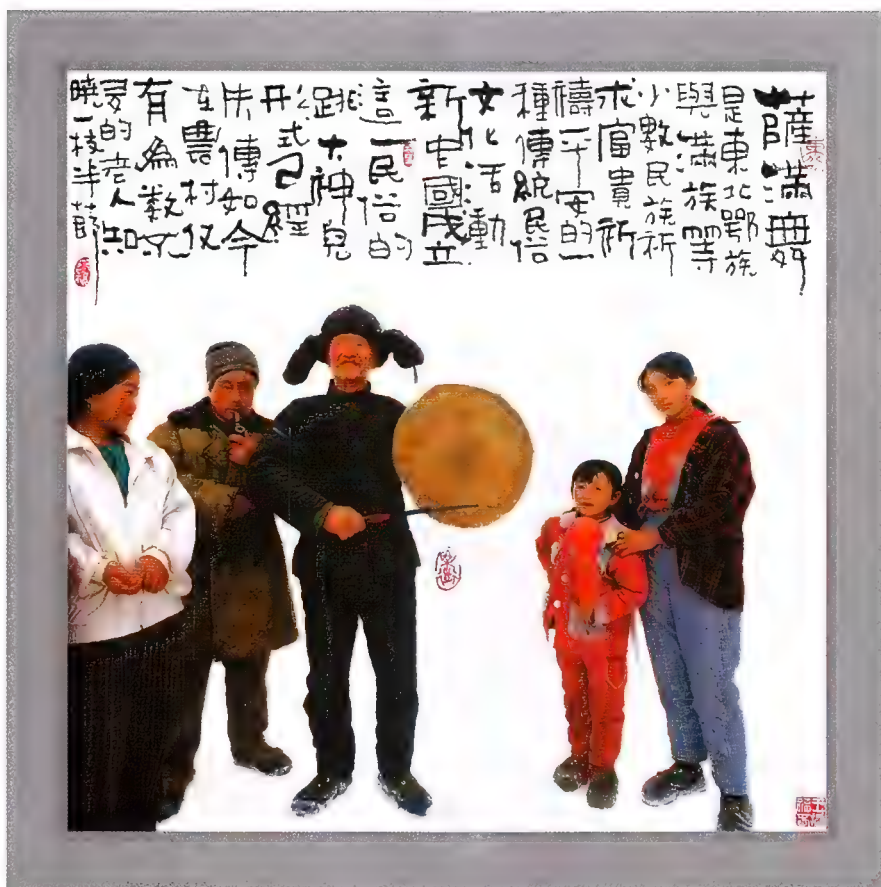
When I came to the home of Sun Chuanli, the village head, there were four or five kids watching TV with the power generated by the bicycle. There were only seven or eight families that have such kind of power generator.

The only primitive school of the village was nothing but two shabby thatched cottages. The howling cold wind with the snowflake insuflated the house from the broken window covered with the plastic cloth and the big hollow in the wall. There was no desk in the seemingly colder classroom and the half-round log supported with the stake was adopted. Children with the cotton-padded cap were seated on the wood frusta, staring at us distractingly.



Dong's Family

The dated preference of sons to daughters is prevalent in villages of Northeastern China. Take the Dong's family for example. The household has seven daughters and one son. Although they have been fined with much money for breach of family plan, they contently believe that the son means the future of the family.



Trumpeters

Trumpeters are the most popular people in the villages of Northeastern Region when there is a grand ceremony, such as wedding or funeral.



Three Treasures

Ginseng, marten and wula sedge are regarded as the three treasures of the Northeastern Region, where is abundant with natural resources.



Killing the Pig for Spring Festival

Every family keeps several pigs in villages of the Northeastern China. During the Spring Festival from December 8th to January of the lunar calendar, each family will have at least one pig ready for celebration. Generally, the meat of one pig can support the family for one year. The butcher expects nothing in return except the hoof for cooking with the blood sausage. Since the winter takes up half a year, they store the meat in the icy snow and fetch some if needed.

We were stunned to learn that these children were considered "fortunate", since there were over 40 children who couldn't afford school at that time.

Even after I returned to Harbin, my mind was still haunted by the shabby school.

Soon my photos got published and raised public awareness. A kind man donated over ¥200,000 to construct the school for Gaohe Village. All of the children are now able to go to school today, and the village finally has electric power a year after the donation.

When I paid another visit to the village recently, and all of the villagers warmly welcomed me and firmly held my hands for a long time. The touching scene reminded me the powerful influence of photography.

One Child, Eight Children

The most unforgettable moment happened when I visited my elder sister of over seventy years old in a remote village named Dongjia Gouzi during the Spring Festival of 1996. Thirty-four years ago, I stayed in that village for over four months when I graduated from the junior high school. At that time, people in the city could hardly eat themselves fill due to natural disasters, but the situation in the village was a little better. As a result, I helped my sister to do some farm work like shovelling earth, mowing, peeling maize with hands and threshing at the harvest time.

Most villagers remain poor today and they can only afford thatched mud houses. There are but a few rich families that can manage to pay for brick houses or 12" black and white televisions. Furthermore, Only a dozen out of a hundred



families here are debt-free and there are over a dozen of bachelors who cannot come up with the money to marry.

To make matter worse, excessive birth rate is also a common problem. I met a poor young mother of eight children, who seemed oblivious to poverty. She believed that it made no difference to bring up one child or eight. And if she had not already have boys, she would keep on bearing children until she does. Hearing her speech, I was agape and tongue-tied.

Handwriting on the Rice Paper

Subsequently, a magazine editor asked for the photo series of the family of Northeastern China, advising me to adopt a white background. From 1996 to 1999, I was devoted to the task with a white cloth of three metres long and five metres

wide. I visited the families there many times. However, these photos were kept in my home without getting published.

There is the international photography festival held in Pingyao every year. When invited to take part in the photography festival held in September 2004, I was going to submit those photos but somehow didn't feel completely satisfied with it. I suddenly hit on a bright idea to match the photo with calligraphy.

Therefore, I printed the picture on a rice paper of 0.9 m² with the ink-jet printer and wrote characters about customs of the Northeastern China on it directly with the writing brush. I finally felt that the original pictures were filled with my true feeling.



Editor's Note: the photo series of the Northeastern China Families by Wang Fuchun was awarded with the Excellent Photographer Prize as well as the cash prize of ¥100,000, which is the top prize of Pingyao International Photography Festival.

A family of Herdsmen

Father has been a herdsman all his life in the village of Northeastern Region and his son runs the same road. There are many village children who received no more than five years of schooling before joining the work force.



The Financial Planner

The housewives here are not only responsible for managing household affairs and raising livestock, but they are also the family financial planner. According to one proverb: man is the rake for gathering money, while woman is the casket for financing.



Harvest

People from the village have a special affection with the black earth. They are grateful for the plentiful harvest in autumn.



My Road Journey of 6,000 km in China

Photos & Article by Lu Jia'neng

A citizen who has held Hong Kong driver's license for more than three years can apply for driver's license in Mainland China. This is great news for driving fans who like to travel. Take me as a good example, I set out from Shanghai and drove my favourite car to north China for a journey of 6,863 km. Along the way, I enjoyed beautiful scenery and have a deep impression on the driving conditions for many places.



August, 2002, I bought my first car in Shenzhen. I drove to Shanghai, where I was studying. I was fascinated by the 1,600 km journey. On July, 2003, I started off from Shanghai with my father who just got his driver's license. We drove to Beijing first, then to Changchun, Harbin, Daqing, Hailar, Manzhouli, Arxan, Tianjin and then took the way back to Shanghai. It took us 14 days to complete the journey of 6,863 km.

Shanghai→Beijing

1,262-km Jinghu expressway

Our first destination is Beijing.

At eight in the morning, we set out from Shanghai. When we reached Shandong, we had to slow down because of the local heavy trucks,



which occupied the overtaking lane.

Shandong and Tianjin sections were the less desirable part of the Jinghu expressway. The asphalt road had an uneven surface, and our car bounced wildly when we drove at high speed. We finally arrived at Beijing at 11 P.M.

Beijing citizens are the first group of private car owners in the country. The local vehicle plate begins with "Jin A" to "Jin H" and the number of private cars ranks first in China. You can see luxury cars everywhere.

When we set out to Sanhuan Lu (3rd Ring Road), we saw a serious traffic accident: four cars were burning. Luckily, we drove far behind them. We would have been in very big trouble if we had arrived 15 seconds earlier.

The second day, my father and I drove to Badaling Great Wall and the Ming Tombs. Badaling expressway is more than 200 km long.

Entering into the Badaling area, we found the wandering mountain roads were made for driving pleasure. Finally, we parked the car near the entrance of the mountain cable car.

It took us an hour to walk down

from the high section of Great Wall. The food in the restaurants near the parking lot was delicious and the price was reasonable. We planned to get to the Ming Tombs through Badaling expressway. When we drove for almost 60 km, we came to a dangerous slope called "dead valley", where traffic accidents happened frequently. We paid special attention to those heavy trucks and tour buses, the so called "road killers" in Mainland China.

Beijing → Changchun

658-km Jingshen expressway, 164-km Shensi expressway and 114-km Changsi expressway

Changchun is the second destination of our journey. The whole journey is 939 km long.

Jinshen expressway is a very complete and world-level highway. We kept driving in Lane 3 or Lane 4 from Beijing to Shenyang. Occasionally, we found some constructions, but generally, they only closed one lane and the traffic was still smooth. There were a few heavy trucks on the road and we could drive at the speed of 160 to 180 km/hr.

The only unfortunate thing happened on the journey was that my front windshield was hit by a small stone flying out from a car ahead of me, and there was a crack like the size of a grain of rice.

Having passed through Shenyang, we came to Shensi and Changsi sections of Shenha expressway. We found the road had cracks made by

overloading heavy vehicles. One should pay extra attention to them.

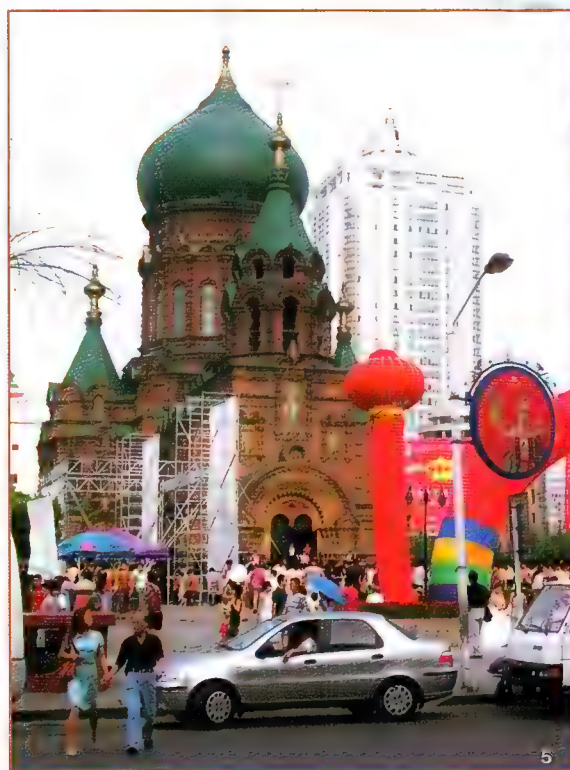
Changchun is the biggest car manufacturing site in China. You can visit the Faw-volkswagen factory by making an appointment.

Faw-volkswagen is a joint-venture automobile factory set up by China First Automobile Group Co., Ltd. and Germany Volkswagen Car Group. The factory mainly produces Volkswagen with brands such as Golf, Bora, Jetta, Audi A6 and A4.

You can also visit the royal palace of Manchukuo (1932-1945, Japanese puppet regime in Northeastern China). It is the palace of Puyi, the last emperor of Qing Dynasty, which was built when he became a puppet emperor of Japan in 1930s. It has been converted into a museum and exhibition hall.

The Jingyue Pool is a National Forest Park. You will find places for camping, barbecuing, skiing and water sports. There are Mongolian

1. Driving in China is fun.
2. Climbing the Great Wall
3. Arriving Jilin
4. War Memorial Museum
5. St. Sophia Church in Harbin





tent hotels and restaurants which provide accommodation and delicious boiled mutton.

When you are driving in Changchun, you will find confusing signposts. Unless you are local people, you may get lost even if you have a detailed map.

Local people were very helpful, and when they found my car carried a Shenzhen license, they would make way for me when I changed lane. I got lost for several times and got the help from some warm-hearted drivers.

Changchun → Harbin

73-km Changde expressway and 187-km Hashuang expressway

After leaving Changchun, I drove to Harbin. The journey is 260 km.

It took us more than two hours to arrive in Harbin.

The signpost system is more complete than the one in Changchun.

We stayed at a hotel located in the travelling hot spot Central Street of

Jingwei Street. It is a pedestrian street in European style, many shops sell Russian products such as wine pots, telescopes, fur and Russian dolls. The special food stores have a variety of red sausage, ham, preserved ham, Jiamusi caviar and Heilongjiang caviar. The local Russian restaurants are reasonably



priced.

We then visited the War Memorial Museum, and it had an exhibition hall displaying the war crime committed by the Japanese Army unit 731.

Harbin → Daqing

346-km Hada expressway

Ending the journey of Harbin, we

entered Inner Mongolia. Our destination was the busiest road port "Manzhouli". There is only one 301 state freeway from Harbin to Manzhouli.

Just like any other expressway, it adopts two-layer lines from Harbin to Daqing. Paved by cement, the road is bumpy.

Daqing is one of the Chinese cities that produces petroleum. There are drilling machines everywhere; most of the residents are engaged in petroleum work.

Sonny, a friend I met in Beijing, invited us to eat northeast food. We were impressed by the dish called grilled cod head. The cod head was imported from Russia. Since the Russian don't eat fish head, Chinese people could buy them at a low price.

Out of Daqing, we found the vehicle flow decreased, and there were many peddlers who sold fruits and vegetables by the roadside.

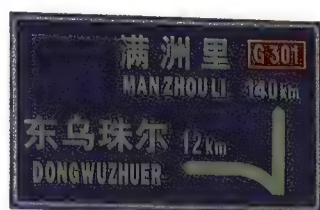
Daqing → Manzhouli

737-km 301 state highway

Stepping into Meilisi Dawur District, we entered into Inner Mongolia. On the road, there were some forest and grassland. Sometimes, we met some sheepherders.

Leaving Qiqihar, we couldn't find gas station and rarely saw cars or people after driving for more than 100 km. There was no street light, no mobile phone signal.

We drove for five hours in the dark night. The mountain area in Wunuer and Boketu of Da Hinggan



301国道

1353

Ling Mountains was so horrible.

We felt relaxed only when we found a little light from a toll station and Frontier Checking Point. At midnight, we reached Yakeshi.

The morning of Yakeshi comes very early and the sky is bright at about 5 A.M. We drove about 3,500 km so far, and the engine oil almost remained the same level. The distance between Yakeshi and Manzhouli is 314 km.

We drove at sand-stone pavement most of the time. There were several road sections with awful conditions. Hopefully the plan to upgrade the state highway would be carried out next year as previously proposed.

We arrived Hailar. The signpost system is not so clear in the downtown. With the help of local truck drivers, we found the exit to Manzhouli. The road is much better than Yakeshi section.

Located in the north of Inner Mongolia and bordering Russian, Manzhouli is a busy port, where lots of Russian and Chinese vehicles come and go every day.

In downtown, most shop signboards are in Russian and almost all the shop assistants can speak Russian. Some of the shops sell Russian gifts; while some of the shops sell Chinese products.

There are many massage parlours, beauty parlours and barber shops run by Mongolians, Chinese or Russians, target at Russian customers. They are very similar to Shenzhen Luohu Commercial City where Hong Kong citizens go there for shopping and leisure. Manzhouli is a place for Russians to enjoy good and inexpensive services.

One of scenic spots in Manzhouli is Guomen Park, where the trains can pass straight toward the Russian territory.

If you like mutton, I recommend the Mongolian boiled mutton. It is first boiled and chopped into pieces, then served with soy sauce. If you miss Russian food in Harbin, never mind, there are lots of Russian

restaurants in Manzhouli.

**Manzhouli → Arxan →
Changchun → Shanghai**

The return journey of 3,322 km

Going back to Shanghai, we went to Arxan bypassing Hailar and then back to Changchun.

It took us 10 hours to drive from Manzhouli to Arxan.

Arxan is a very small city shaped up by Wenquan Street. Wuzang Hot Spring is the travel hot spot. You can go skiing here in winter, and you can also visit the Stone Forest scenic spot of Rose Peak nearby.

After leaving Arxan, we entered into the Da Hinggan Ling Mountain area and drove to Changchun. The 302 state freeway from Baicheng to Changchun section is smooth. We soon head to Xingcheng.

When we returned to Shanghai, we took the Jintang expressway through the Tuhe exit of Jingshen expressway, and then we changed

to Jinghe expressway at Tanggu.

In Yancheng service district of Jiangsu, we stopped and had dinner. Yancheng service district provides customers with a road set menu of ¥25. The customers are all drivers, but surprisingly, we found a big bottle of beer!

The journey from Arxau to Shanghai is 3,100 km. Exhansted but excited, we finished our 6,863 km adventure.

1. The Mongolian food in Manzhouli
2. Daqing is a major city which produces petroleum.
3. You can hardly see any cars or people when during in Inner Mongolia.
4. The Sino-Russian border



Driving Tips in Northeastern China

1. Most of roads in northeastern China and Inner Mongolia are very good, but some road sections are damaged by heavy vehicles and the road can be quite bumpy.

On the road of Inner Mongolia, what you see is small traffic flow and few sights by the side of roads. You should try to control the speed because it is easy to pass the speed limit. You may find lots of waste rail tracks, but some of them are still in use; drivers should be extra careful when crossing the rail tracks.

2. In downtown of northeastern China and Inner Mongolia, you may find the signpost obscure. You can seek local assistance. Taxi and truck drivers are more aware of the local road conditions and short-cuts.

3. There are many frontier areas and Frontier Checking Stations. Have your passport and license ready and register at the checking station.

In Inner Mongolia, the fire prevention period is March 15 to June 15, September 15 to December 15. Checking station should inspect fire prevention license and fire prevention cap.

4. Most of the gas stations are run by China Petroleum in North East China and Inner Mongolia. You can find #93 petroleum in many places, but it is very difficult to find #97 petroleum after leaving from big cities. Inner Mongolia is large, you should try to fill up whenever you can.

5. If you drive in Inner Mongolia and northeastern China, you should use anti-freeze.

6. Once you enter the Sihuan Lu of Beijing downtown, you need to have a temporary Beijing downtown permit if your vehicle doesn't have a local license.

Traffic police would check whether your car's exhaustion is on par with the acceptable level before granting the permit. You should put the permit on the front windshield so that the Beijing traffic police can identify it.



URUMQI

— THE CHARMING LAND OF SNOW

ABOUT URUMQI

Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, is the centre of politics, economy, culture and transportation of Xinjiang, one of the key towns of the north section of the Silk Roads and also the window of China's opening to the west and the western China's "bridgehead" of the Eurasia Bridge. It is situated under the northern foot of Tianshan Mountain and on southern edge of the Junggar Basin, where mixes thirty nationalities like Han, Uygur, Kazakstan, Mongolian, Hui, Kirgiz, Tajik, Tatar, Xibo, Russian, Uzbek, Manchu and Daur. The city has the population of 2.15 million. After over fifty years' construction, it boasts the progressive economy, steady social environment and solid and harmonious relationship of nationalities and the title of Chinese Excellent Tourist City.

In Mongolian of Junggar, Urumqi means the beautiful pasture, which enjoys abundant tourism resources. The Bogda Snow Peak, No. 1 Glacier, beautiful pasture of Mt. Tianshan, Xinjiang Salt Lake and Dabancheng Swamp all make up of the scroll of magnificent natural pictures. In the downtown area there is the International Grand Bazaar, Xinjiang Ethnic Street, Erdaoqiao Market, Hantengri Mosque. Festival celebrating activities involves maxrap dance, the dance of Daolang race, horse race, goat-skin snatching, girl's chase, etc. There are varieties of local food like fried mutton, melon and fruit and kabob, which feature the dense national flavour.

There are 83 hotels of different star levels in Urumqi, including seven five-star hotels and eight four-star hotels. Urumqi Airport is one of the five key airports in China, which boasts 63 domestic and international flight courses. The highway network that takes the city as the centre and extends in all directions as well as the consummate communication system brings great convenience to businessmen and tourists. The city shares the dry climate of continental intermediate temperate zone with great temperature difference, low rainfall and a long winter season. The hottest month is July, when the average temperature is 23.5°C. And the coldest month is January, when the average temperature may drop to -15°C. The annual average temperature is about 6°C.



ICE & SNOW



Mount Xuelian Golf Light Skiing Field

Mount Xuelian Golf Light Skiing Field is located under the foot of Bogda Peak of Mt. Tianshan, six kilometres far from the city, north of Shuimogou Scenic Area with convenient transportation. In winter it

is the skiing field, while in summer, the golf course. The skiing field covers an area of 120,000 m², boasting eight skiing slides of different grades, each of which has the skiing and drag-pull ropeways. The slopes are suitable for both learners and professionals. There are also the professional coaches and the medical care personnel on spot.

Besides, in the skiing field there is Xuelian Mount Hongfu Sunshine Vacation Hotel covering an area of 12,000 m², which is composed of Chinese and western restaurants, bar, guestrooms, Karaoke boxes, gymnasium, business centre and spa.

The skiing field is usually in business from December to March for the whole day. The golf course is open from April, which has the 18 holes of international standard, nine lighting courses and the lighting driving range with thirty swinging seats.

Travel Tips

- **Address:** Xuelian Mountain, Wanjiao 20 East, Shuimogou District, Urumqi.
- **Transportation:** You may take No. 34 or 104 bus to the field, where the special bus to the reception centre and the bus to the living is available.
- **Fee for the skiing field:** ¥50 per hour, ¥70 two hours, ¥100 four hours and ¥120 for the whole day, all weekdays (including personal and car insurance), ¥20 for skiing clothes rent and ¥30/hour for professional skiing coach, skier must be insured.
- **Fee for the golf field:** ¥50 on weekdays and ¥70 on holidays for nine holes, ¥100 on weekdays and ¥140 on holidays for 18 holes, ¥10 for a basket of balls in the driving range.
- **Others:** ¥30/person time for sky lift balloon and ¥50/person time for drag-pull parachute.
- **Tel:** (0991) 487 3888/487 3666
- **Fax:** (0991) 487 4198
- **Website:** www.xj.golf.com.cn



Tianshan International Skiing Centre

Tianshan International Skiing Centre is located in the centre of Nanshan Scenic Area of Urumqi in Tianshan Mountain, 56 km from the city. The centre covers an area of 37.45 km². It is the comprehensive ground integrating with competition, training, tourism and culture, which can serve international competition after completing construction.

The skiing centre boasts the vantage location and unique climate. Among the successive mountains there are four peaks with the altitude of over 3,000 m. The skiing centre is quite open and as broad as 600 m. Due to the unique landform, the inversion



temperature zone boasts the humid climate, rich rainfall, the broad plains and myriads of pastures among the forest, mountain and champaign. In summer horses and sheep are scattered around the mountains with exuberant trees and grasses. In winter the snow gleams white all over and the snowy period is long. The skiing period can last seven months annually.

The area with the altitude of over 2,400 m has the fine snow of 1.5 m deep. Furthermore, Baiyanggou Scenic Area where the skiing centre is located boasts the typical natural beauty of Tianshan Mountain. Thus, it is the ideal location for skiing in winter and spending summer holidays.

The skiing centre has the skiing course of 120 km, the snowboard course, 56 ropeways, the U-groove, freestyle jumping platform and skiing motor, the standard race track, cable car and tennis court, etc.

Travel Tips

- **Address:** Wanshan Scenic Area of Urumqi.
- **Fee:** ¥60 per hour, ¥120 four hours and ¥120 for the whole day on weekdays and ¥70 per hour, ¥150 for the whole day on holidays for ski.
- **Others:** ¥30 per hour and ¥60 four hours on weekdays for ski ring, ¥30 on weekdays and ¥50 on holidays for one piece of ski clothes.
- **Tel:** (0991) 284 2639 (Wanshan area) / 593 2629 (Scenic area)
- **Fax:** (0991) 284 582
- **Website:** www.tianshanski.com



Silk Roads International Skiing Resort

Silk Roads International Skiing Resort, which covers an area of one million square metres, is located in Pingxiliang of Shuixigou under the foot of Mt. Tianshan. It takes 38 km to Urumqi City and 55 km to the airport. The transportation is quite convenient with the ring highroad, expressway and third-class highroad accessible. The Nanshan Scenic Area has the altitude of 2,477 m at highest and 1,825 m at lowest with the temperature in winter of just -10°C . The average skiing period lasts more than five months.



Travel Tips

- Address: Pingxiliang Village, Shuixigou Town, Shuixigou County
- Fee: ¥30 for the entry and ¥100 for the skiing. The ski equipment is available for hire in the resort. The rental fee is ¥10 for the ski equipment and ¥5 for the ski boots. The rental fee for the ski equipment is ¥10 for the ski equipment and ¥5 for the ski boots. The rental fee for the ski equipment is ¥10 for the ski equipment and ¥5 for the ski boots.
- Tel: (991) 944 0001 (Urumqi) / 296 3191 (scenic area)
- Website: www.silkroad.com.cn



The skiing resort

has six skiing courses of different grades with the total length of 20 km and the acreage of 0.27 million m^2 . The longest skiing course is 2,330 m long and the most challengeable top-grade skiing course is 1,035 m long with the vertical fall of 570 m, the greatest gradient of 20° and the average gradient of 16° . The medium-grade ski course is 800 m with the vertical fall of 135 m, the greatest gradient of 20° and the average gradient of 14.6° . The elementary ski course is over 3,000 m with the average gradient of 2° - 6° . The skiing resort has the lowest gradient of 7° and the highest of 25° , which fully meet the needs of skiers. There is also the snowboarding park, where tourists shall enjoy the fun of it.

The skiing resort boasts the most advanced snow making and pressing machines, two funicular railways with box including the funicular railway with double boxes of 900 m long, five large-scale drag-pull ropeways and two small-scale drag-pull ropeways, which can deliver 5,000 persons per hour. Besides, the American Bell-206 helicopter, power hang delta-winged aircraft, fire balloon and the power para-glider are also available for tourists.



Tianshan Tianchi Skiing Centre

Tianchi Lake is located in the mountainside of Bogda Mountain of Mt. Tianshan in the border of Fukang City, Changji Prefecture, which is the main stay location when touring Mt. Tianshan. It is 110 km far from Urumqi with about one hour drive. It is the half-moon moraine lake with the altitude of 1,910 m, the length of 3,400 m, the width of 1,510 m, the depth of 105 m and the water area of five square kilometres. Southeast to the lake is lofty Bogda Mountain with the altitude of 5,445 m. The bluish green lake water reflects the snowy peak of Mt. Tianshan, which is so pure and beautiful that challenge the natural scenes of

North Europe.

In winters of 2002 and 2003, the government of Changji Prefecture and Xinjiang Tourism Administration jointly held the Tianshan Tianchi Ice & Snow Tourism Festivals successively with many winter tourism items like water-skiing, skiing, snowman making, ice sculpture show, hanging ice wall, ice and snow ball and art performance, etc, which attract trains of tourists from both home and abroad.

Travel Tips

- Transportation: You may take the train in front of Xitumen Park to Tianchi Lake. The fare records the number of passengers in a train. If there are six persons, it shall be ¥55 per person.
- Address: Pingxiliang Village, Shuixigou Town, Shuixigou County
- Fee: ¥100 (the admission ticket of Tianchi Lake) which will drop to ¥25 from November 1st to March 31st.



The round and go ropeway and the bus from the ropeway stop to the lake shall cost ¥15 respectively, besides since the footpath around the lake has not been constructed, you may stroll in the forest and admire the Dongxian Tianchi Lake and the waterfall. The boat shall cost ¥20/person.

DOWNTOWN ATTRACTIONS

The International Grand Bazaar (Folk Songs & Dances)

The International Grand Bazaar covers an area of 39,888 m² with the total construction area of 0.1 million m². It is not only the symbol of the prosperity of Xinjiang's commerce and tourism but also the landmark of the ethnic landscape of Urumqi, which has the dense Islamic architecture style. It recurs the boom of the ancient Silk Roads and reflects the dense national features of Western Regions and the regional culture.

The whole Grand Bazaar comprises the building groups such as, the Grand Theater of Banquet and Performance of 6,100 m², the Restaurant Plaza of 8,000 m², the Happiness Square of 3,000 m², the Outdoors Performance Square of 600 m², the No. 1 Sightseeing Tower of Xinjiang of 80 m high, the sightseeing Islamic mosque and the large-scale open stage, etc. Besides, in the grand bazaar there is a team of female rangers, who keep the public security with the police.

No.1 Sightseeing Tower of Xinjiang is the most eye-catching one. The tower is equipped with the elevator. The external wall has the pattern decorations built by laying bricks and the large-size relief sculptures of Twelve Maqams. The first storey is the sightseeing platform, which covers an area of 216.5 m². The second is the Palaike Bar, where has the graphics context of the scenes of "Ten Mysteries of Xinjiang" and introduction of national customs and practices of Xinjiang together with unique decorations on the wall. On the top is the Exhibition Hall of "Epic of Western Regions", where introduces the progress of Xinjiang from the end of Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China to Today.



Grand Theater of Banquet and Performance

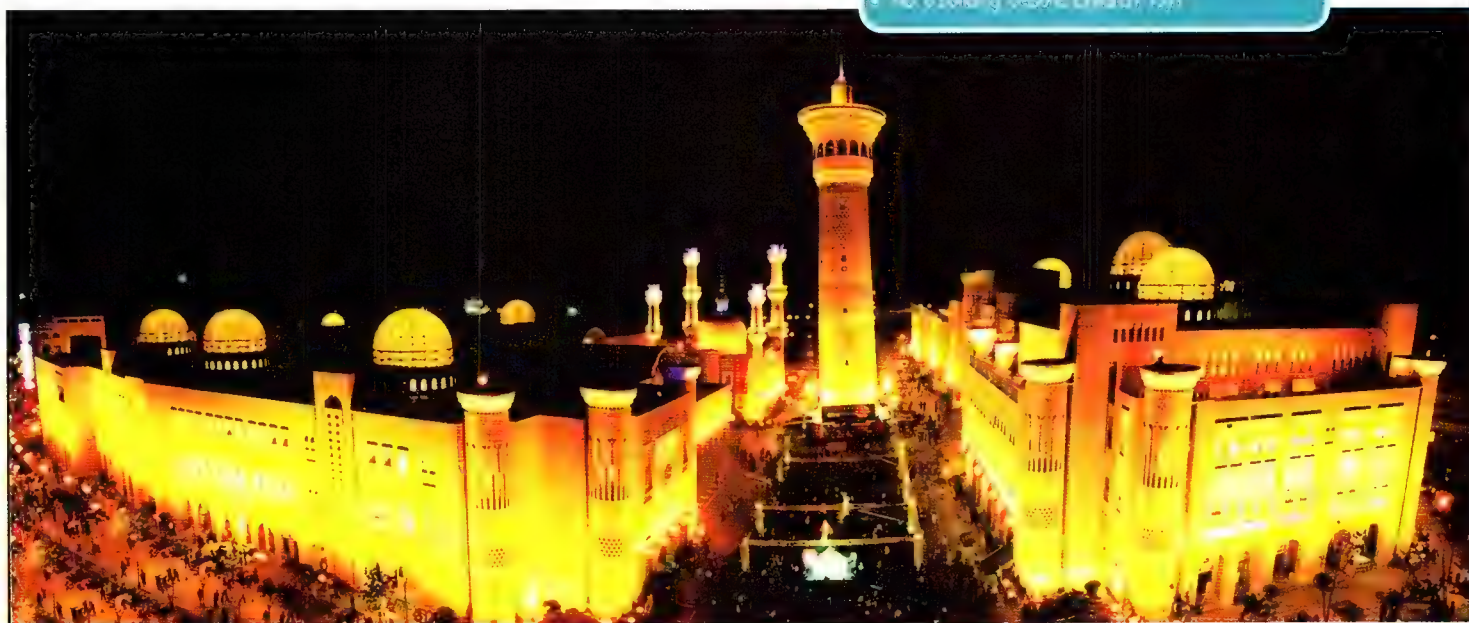
The theater is the present largest theater for banquet and large-size song and dance performance, where can hold one thousand persons for dinning. It has fifty loges of Guxi City style and luxury ones, providing with five-star services. Besides, the International Grand Bazaar Arts Troupe with near one hundred career troupers, senior dancers and national artists brings the splendid performances of dense ethnic flavour.

Eight Markets

The Grand Bazaar involves various businesses, like clothing, carpet, leather goods, knife goods, musical instruments, ceramic products, gold, silver, copper and iron and boutique goods, various fried fruit, medicinal materials and local cates, etc. According to the category of commodities, it is divided into eight markets: Xinjiang Ethnic Medicines Trade Base (7,800 m²), Xinjiang Jewel and Jade Articles "Mother Ship" (4,500 m²), Xinjiang Handicraft Distributing Centre (5,000 m²), Xinjiang Professional Carpet City (6,000 m²), Xinjiang Ethnic Cloth City (2,800 m²), Xinjiang Local Dried Fruit City (2,000 m²), Xinjiang Ethnic Apparel City (2,800 m²) and the first Carrefour Supermarket in Xinjiang (8,300 m²).

Shopping Guide

- No. 1 building: General merchandise and apparel
- No. 2 building: medicine and medicine
- No. 3 and 4 buildings: ethnic medicine
- No. 5 building: jewelry and jewelry food shops
- No. 6 building: leather, children's toys





Xinjiang Ethnic Street (The Fabulous Xinjiang)

Xinjiang Ethnic Street adjoining to Erdaoqiao Market comprises of five buildings, each of which is five storied and connected with the corridor so that tourists may shuttle round for shopping. With the tenet of “the street-miniature of Xinjiang”, it boasts the ethnic catering street, ethnic custom street, Euro-Asia commodity street, jewel street, where can hold over 1,600 stores. In the top of the fourth and fifth buildings there are the museums, which are managed jointly by the Tourism Company of Xinjiang Ethnic Street and Xinjiang University. Four Xinjiang miniature landscape halls show the geographical circumstance and city construction of every city of Xinjiang with large-size models.

The first building has the Xinjiang snacks in the ground floor, 13 ethnic food cities in the second, third and fourth and the top-grade banquet hall in the fifth. The second building has the same arrangement with the first. The third building has the bank, post office and dried fruit stores etc, in the ground floor, local medicinal material hall and exhibition centre in the second, the ethnic musical instrument and book stores in the third, the performance hall of Kanbarhan Troupe and the Wedding Celebration and Etiquette service centre in the fourth and the exhibition hall in the fifth. The fourth building has the Central Asian import handicraft hall



in the ground floor, the ethnic cosmetics hall in the second, the cap and embroidery hall and ethnic apparel hall in the third, the leather-clothing hall in the fourth and Xinjiang miniature landscape hall in the fifth floor. The fifth building has the treasure halls in the first two floors, the stores for gold, pearl, agate and crystal etc, in the third, the exquisite curio hall in the fourth and the Xinjiang miniature landscape hall in the fifth floor, which is connected with the fourth building.



Erdaoqiao Market (Shopping Centre)

Since 2004, Erdaoqiao market has developed into the ethnic commercial centre. It comprises of the reformed Erdaoqiao market, the International Grand Bazaar and Xinjiang Ethnic Street. The reformed Erdaoqiao Market is the three-storied shopping building equipped with the escalator in every floor. There are shops in the underground floor, where sells ethnic handicrafts like musical instrument, bonnet, silk, Yingisar knife and dried fruit like walnut, raisin and preserved apricot, and stalls of carpets of Hkotan and Kashi and ethnic apparels in the second and third floors.



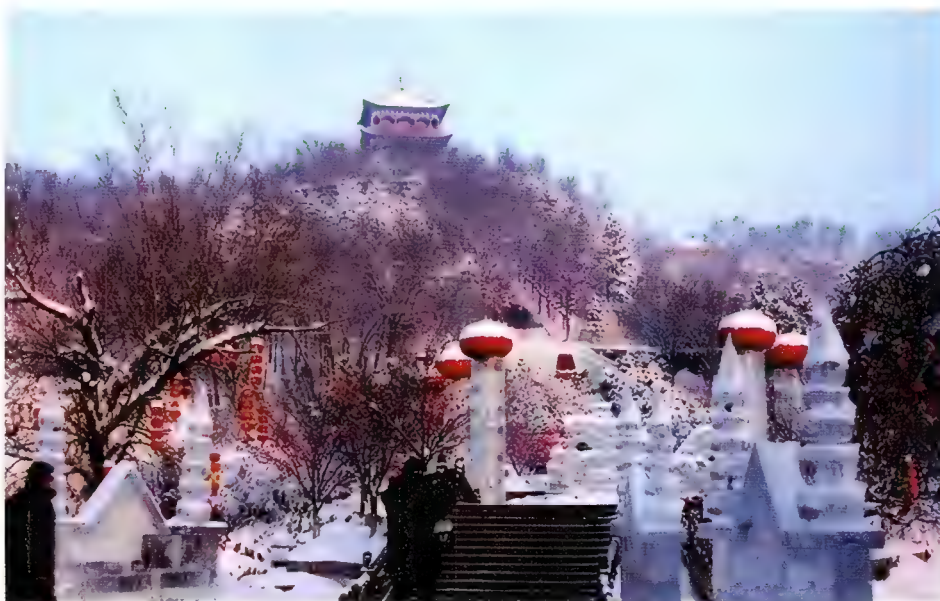
The Geographical Centre of Asian-Europe Continent

The Geographical Centre of Asian-Europe Continent is located in Baojia Caozi Village of Yongfeng Town, 30 km from Urumqi. The scenic area takes the Landmark Tower of the Geographical Centre of Asian-Europe Continent as its core and fulcrum. The tower is composed of four square vertical shafts with the “A” shape in four sides, which is the first letter of Asia, meaning the centre of Asia. There is also the lanneret-like steel structured gate of over 20 m high, the Asian Centre Square of hemisphere shape and stone and wooden carving totems, which symbolise the cultural crystal of

49 countries. Besides, the highway of class is accessible to the scenic area.

The Red Hill Park

The Red Hill is 910 m high and made up of the claret sandstone. At dawn or daybreak, the hill has the red shine. It is storied that there was a great red dragon in Tianchi Lake. Because it used to disturb the river water of Urumqi, the dragon was cut into two pieces by West Queen Mother, which turned into the Red Hill and Yanmalik Hill. However, the river was still always in flood. Local people attributed the cause to the dragon. Thus, a governor of Qing Dynasty had the Pagodas of Dragon Guarding of 10 m high



constructed respectively in these two hills. Today though the pagoda of Yanmalik Hill has collapsed, that of the Red Hill is well preserved. In the Red Hill Park there are 18 attractions like the Reclining Dragon Fountain, Rare Treasure Cave, Taibai Sandstone Cave, ropeway, Computerised Fountain, Embracing Beauty Garden and the waterfall.



Nanshan Farm

Nanshan Farm is situated under the northern foot of Kalawucheng Mountain of Mt. Tianshan. It is the natural scenic area integrating with high mountains, forest and grassland, where is pure and fresh and pretty. Main sight spots are distributed around various parallel ravines of the front mountain, like West Baiyang Ravine, Chrysanthemum Mesa of Gangou Township, East Baiyang Ravine, Zhaobi Hill of Shuixigou Township, Miao'er Ravine and Daxi Ravine, from west to east.

West Baiyang Ravine, which is the most popular spot, has the altitude of 2,252 m. There are exuberant spruces, flocks and herds and yurts of Kazak dotted around the grassland. You may appreciate the national customs and practices of Kazak like amusements of horse race, goat-skin snatching, girl's chase. You may also pay a visit to hospitable Kazak family, where you may

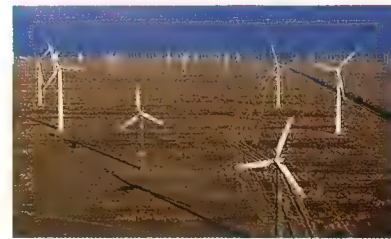
be treated with tea with milk, koumiss and mutton. Not far from the villa area, there is the grand waterfall of over 40 m. The scenic area of East Baiyang Ravine is located in the border of Banfanggou township, 56 km south to Urumqi. The Luye Villa is the only three-starred vacation hotel in natural scenic areas of Xinjiang. It boasts commensurate service facilities and is superior location for spending holidays. The scenic area of Chrysanthemum Mesa is located in the border of Gangou township, over fifty kilometres south to Urumqi. It has the altitude up to 2,400 m, covering an area of about 500 ha. It is the sector alluviation mesa with gentle slope, where is like the earthly paradise with dense pines and exuberant grass.



PERIPHERAL ATTRACTIONS

Chaiwobao Wind Power Station

There are over one hundred wind power generators in the Chaiwobao near the Dabacheng Town beside Urumqi-Turpan Highway, which is the Asian largest wind power station. Xinjiang is divided by Tianshan Mountain like a great barrier and has the Tarim and Junggar Basins. They have different climates, which forms the convection current. Dabacheng Town is just located in the opening of the barrier, where there is so mighty wind power that is suitable for electricity generation.



Xinjiang Safari Park

Xinjiang Safari Park is part of the natural preserve of the south of Bogda Mountain. It is 25 km from Urumqi and covers an area of 75 km². The park mainly involves the unique

landscape of wilderness and hills and the wild animals suitable for living in this area. It provides tourists with rich wind plant and animal resources of Xinjiang and the protection and multiplication of rare and endangered species of animals. The park is composed of the animals keeping area, scientific research and medical care centre and management and service centre, etc. There are 262 animals like Mongol wild ass, argali, ibex, goa, red deer of Mt. Tianshan. Among them, there are three species of state A-level protected animals and four species of state B-level protected animals.

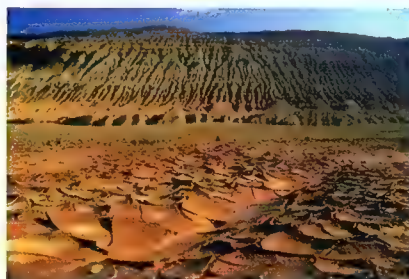


The Flaming Mountain

The Flaming Mountain is 100 km and 10 km wide. The highest peak is 831.7 m high. It is composed of red gritstone, conglomerate and mudstone of the Jurassic, Cretaceous and Triassic periods. Under sunshine, the mountain turns into reddish brown like the violent flame.

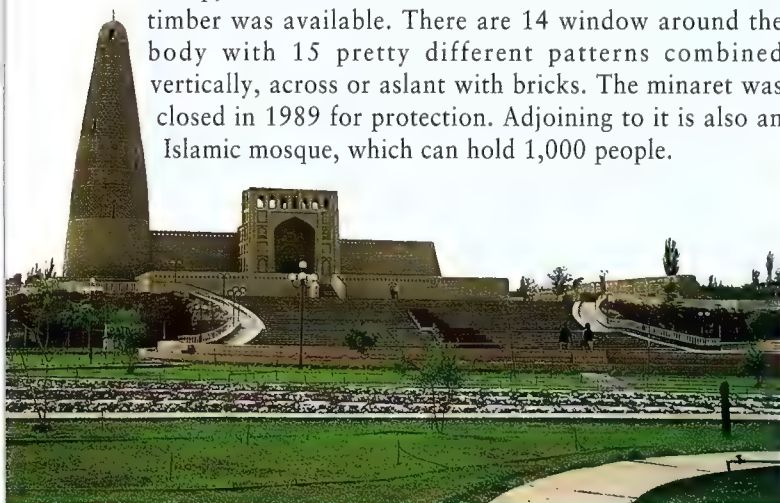
In the late year of 2004, the Alchemy Tripod was constructed according to Pilgrimage to West and open to public, which covers an area of 2,700 m² including ground and underground areas.

Inside the tripod there is the thermometre of 12 m, which can indicate the local temperature.



The Sugong Minaret

The Sugong Minaret was constructed by the 2nd king of Turpan in 1778 in memory of his father. The brick minaret is 37 m high. The diameter of the bottom is 10 m. The minaret features broad bottom and narrow top. There is no cross beam inside and admirably the building is just supported by the circle ladder with 72 steps from bottom to top, which shows the wisdom of constructors when no timber was available. There are 14 window around the body with 15 pretty different patterns combined vertically, across or aslant with bricks. The minaret was closed in 1989 for protection. Adjoining to it is also an Islamic mosque, which can hold 1,000 people.



The Ruins of Jiaohe

Jiaohe is the old name of Turpan. The Ruins of Jiaohe is located on the island between two dry rivers. The two rivers is divided in the north end of the island and joins together in the south. The island is over 1,600 m long and over 300 m at the widest. Due to the erosion of river water, there is the bluff of 30 m high around surrounded with the river of 100 m wide, which is so steep that becomes the natural barrier of the city.

Bosten Lake

Boasting Chinese largest continental freshwater lake, Bosten Lake is located in the southeast of Yanji Basin of Bayingolin Autonomous State. It expands across Kurla City, Bohu County, Yanqi County and Hoxud County, covering an area of 1,228 km². As the ruptured lake and the large-scale natural reservoir, it is the end of Kaidu River and the headstream of Peacock River. The river, which is composed



of the great lake area and the bulrush area (small lake area), is not only the largest fishery base of Xinjiang but also one of the forth bulrush production base of China.

The Kizil Thousand-Buddha Caves

The Kizil Thousand-Buddha Caves is located in the north side of Weigan River in the border of Baicheng County of Aksu. As the earliest large-scale grottoes of Western China, it boasts the second Dunhuang Grottoes. It is one of the present few grottoes that have the subject matter of Hinayana and the important research source of Buddhist history of ancient Qiuci State of Western Regions. The Buddha caves extend for three kilometres around the mountains. There are 236 numbered caves, covering an area of 10,000 m². The mural paintings reflect vividly the situation of travelling businessmen in the Silk Roads and the daily life of Quici people at ancient time.



Taklimakan Desert

Taklimakan Desert is situated in the centre of Tarim Basin. It is about 1,000 km from west to east and 400 km from north to south, covering an area of 33,760 km². It is the No. 2 desert in the world, just second to Sahara Desert in Africa. Taklimakan means that when you enter, you shall never get out of it, so it is also called the Dead Sea. Generally the dune is 70-80 m high with the highest of 250 m. The Desert Highway, which begins from Lunnan of Luntai County, crosses the entire desert and reaches the Minfeng County in the south, is 520 km long.

The Kuqa Mosque

The Kuqa Mosque is located in Kuqa County of Aksu, it is second only to the Id Kah Mosque in Xinjiang. It is storied that the patriarch of Ishak Sect constructed the mosque in 16th century. The mosque is made up of the Grand Prayer Hall, the little mosque, the Precept Declaration Building, the vaulted gate tower, the Moon Viewing Building and the residence. The whole buildings group is integrated and grand. The most eye-catching is the Precept Declaration building, which is 20 m high. The Grand Service Hall is composed of the front and back halls. The front hall, which covers an area of 1,165 m², is supported with 88 columns with various engravings matted with the cobblestone. It can hold 3,000 muslins for worship at best.



Tianshan Gorges

Tianshan Gorges is located 64 km north to Kuqa County of Aksu and 1025.8 km north to No. 217 state highway. It is made up of one gorge

and three ravines (Gaishi, Shenshe and Motian) with 42 named attractions. The well-preserved mural paintings were painted in the 8th century. The finding of the cave and the gorge is close related. In 1999 a herdsman found the mural paintings in the cave when he gathered medicinal herbs in the mountain in a rainy day, so he reported it to the government. Thus, the gorge was found.

Diversiform-leaved Poplar Forest Park

According to the statistic, most of diversiform-leaved poplars are distributed in China, over 90 % of which are in the drainage area of Tarim River in Xinjiang. At present, in the Taklimakan Desert in the border of Luntai County lies the most ancient, largest and perfect preserved diversiform-leaved poplar preservation zone in the world. The Diversiform-leaved Poplar Forest Park constructed in 1993 covers an area of over 20,000 ha, where gathers most species of diversiform-leaved poplar in the world. The park has been listed as the Natural Preserve of Uygur Autonomous Region, Xinjiang.





The Id Kah Mosque

The Id Kah Mosque is the grand Islamic architecture, which was constructed in 1442 and covers an area of about two hectares. It is made up of the gate tower, courtyard, prayer hall and the worship hall. The mosque can hold 6,000 people. The gate is 4.7 m high. Beside two sides of the tower are the brick columns of 12.5 m high, on the tops of which are the buildings, where the priests summon muslims for worship. Inside the gateway is the courtyard. In left and right sides is where muslims make prayer. In the end is the worship hall, which is constructed on the platform and enclosed with the low fence. The worship hall, which is made up of the internal and external halls and the entrance, is 140 m long from north to south and 19 m wide from west to east. The external hall is supported with 140 green engraved wooden columns of seven metres high.



The Handcrafts Street

The Handcrafts Street is located near the Id Kah Mosque. In sides of the street there are stalls selling varieties of ethnic handicrafts like musical instrument, copper kettle, box, food, scarves, cap and knife, etc, which are mostly made by skillful craftsmen. It surely worth strolling no matter whether you want to buy anything or not.



The Xiangfei (Iparhan) Mausoleum

The Xiangfei (Iparhan) Mausoleum is also called Abakh Hoj Mausoleum, located in the village five kilometres northeast to Kashi City. The mausoleum was constructed in 1640, where buries Abakh Hoj, King of Hoja Regime and his family. It is storied that Xiangfei, a daughter of Emperor Qianglong of Qing Dynast was also buried there, so the mausoleum is also called Xiangfei Tomb.

The mausoleum covers an area of 4.8 ha. Inside the gate facing south is the great rectangle courtyard. It is made up of the gate tower, high and low mosques, Jiaman Great Mosque, the prayer hall, the main coffin chamber and the orchard. The main coffin chamber is the principal part and located in the east of the mausoleum. It is the largest architecture of the dome pattern in Xinjiang. The chamber, which features the rectangle, is 35 m wide, 29 m deep and over 10 m high. The lofty dome with the diametre of 17 m in the central section has the shining facing of coloured glaze. There are three floors of stages underground, where arranges the signs of the mausoleum, which are all faced with coloured glaze tiles. The engraving method of this kind of tiles has lost. It is storied that the mausoleum buried 72 members of five generations of Abakh Hoja family. There are only 58 tombs remained.



Kashi Bazaar

Kashi Bazaar, or Kashi International Trade Market of Middle and Central Asia, is located in the east side of Tuman River in northeast of Kashi. Outside the bazaar there are some simple grocery stalls selling bean starch, melon and fruit. The bazaar has 21 special sections with over 4,000 fixed stalls and one Food Street, where you can find the Uygur embroidered bonnet, with which girls of Uygur express love to lads, Yengisar knife with beautiful decorative pattern in the hilt, carpets of rich patterns and silk cloth. Beside the tourism souvenirs, you may also find commodities, clothes, shoes and motor parts, etc. Inside the bazaar there is the two storied buildings, where has a big carpet factory upstairs.

TRAVEL TIPS



Transportation

Airport: The external-ring road connects the airport and railway station, and it is about 25-minute drive from downtown to the airport.

Railway Station: arrive at the south railway station by buses No. 2, 8, 10, 16, 20, 36, 44, 50, 52, 58, 902, 906, 909 and 915. Hotline: (0991) 581 3771

Passenger Stations: Two central passenger stations are set up in the downtown area, i.e. Nianzigou passenger station and Nanjiao (South Suburb) passenger station controlling regular buses for different routes. Both passenger stations sell tickets by computer, and with articles deposit services and a good order.

Nianzigou Passenger Station: The long-distance coaches for Korla city, Ili area, Bole area, Tacheng area, Altay area and Hami area will start from here. For the trip to Changji city, you can take buses No. 8, 44, 2, 52 at the stop opposite Hongfu hotel, Wuyi Rd. There is one bus every two minutes and it takes one-hour drive to Changji. For inquiry, please dial (0991) 581 4898.

Nanjiao (South Suburb) Passenger Station: Nearby Santunbei reservoir, there are long-distance coaches for Bayingolin Mongol autonomous prefecture, Aksu area, Kashi Area, Hotan area and Turpan Area. This station is a smaller scale than that of Nianzigou station, but it is clean and in good order. You can take buses No. 101, 17 and 51, or dial (0991) 286 6635 for enquiry.

Traffic in the City: The bus or minibus fare is ¥1 before 22:00, ¥2 after 22:00. The taxis are black, red and blue, and they cost ¥6 for the first three kilometres, thereafter, ¥1.3 per/km.

Useful Contact

Police 110 Fire 119 Emergency Call Centre 120
Weather Report 121 Search Telephone number 114
Postal express delivery 185
Travel complaint hotline: (0991) 462 3900
Urumqi Municipal Travel Bureau: 52 Xihong East Rd.
Postal code: 830063
www.urumqitour.com www.urumqitour.gov.cn

Information

Shopping Mall:

The large-scale shops include Danlu Fashion Square, Tianbai, Huijia Times and Dongfang 100 located in Zhongshan Rd and Parkson Shopping Centre in Youhaonan road and Haotai Saite Shopping Centre in



Youhaobei road, these shops are all equipped with supermarkets. Of them, the underground supermarket of Parkson Shopping Centre is the largest one, selling deluxe goods, the same as as Danlu Fashion Square. The business hours of Danlu Fashion Square are 11:00 to 22:00 from Monday to Friday in summer, 11:00 to 22:30 at weekends and festivals and holidays; 11:30 to 21:30 in winter. The business hours of Dongfang 100 are 10:00 to 22:00.

Food Street: The Food Streets of Xingfu Rd and Gymnasium Rd. offer delicious foods-of different style. The average price for three to four persons is ¥200. Other Food Street is located in Gongyuan Street in front of Renmin Park. The famous night food street, like Huanghe Road night fair or Wuyi Starlight night fair, it is usually open on May 1 every year, depending on weather condition, it is open until the snow season comes (about nine to ten months).





The Highway to Romance

Photos by Gao Shujun Article by Huang Yanhong

At the age of 65, Mr. Gao or Old Gao as he is called, decided to learn how to ride motorbike, just to keep his marriage alive. In two and a half years, he rode his motorbike, which carried his dear old wife, to travel north and south for over 50,000 km. Then he took up lessons to drive a four-wheeled vehicle, trying to meet the challenge of even longer expeditions. In four years, his journey covered 140,000 km and he took quite a few thousand pictures.

Being on the road for so many years, the duo are not tired out at all. What is more important, their love has risen to a higher level.

Old Gao is named Gao Shujun. The first time I met him, I was deeply impressed by his strong handshake. With a cunning smile, he told me that it was his powerful handshake that helped him getting his driver's license.

The Magic of a Powerful Handshake

When he first applied for driving lesson, Old Gao was 68, eight years well over the age limit of 60. Yet he would not give up. He collected 50 of his published articles and sent them to the chief of Wuxi Traffic Administrative Bureau, hoping to move him with his enthusiasm.

But the bureau administrator would have none of it, "You passed the age limit for driving, old man." Old Gao pleaded, "There're 150 million elderly people in China. Why shouldn't they have the right to drive?" Then he visited the administrator by first giving him a powerful handshake. Unprepared, the administrator felt such pain that he let out an "Ouch!" Immediately, he began to look at Old Gao in a new way. Old Gao told the administrator that he used to drive a tank during the Korean War and even a few years ago, he rode a motorbike and travelled with his wife for over 50,000 km.

Finally, the administrator asked, "Why do you want to drive a car so badly?" Old Gao didn't hesitate, "Courting my wife again."

The administrator was taken aback by the surprise answer. Deeply touched, the man said to Old Gao, "I will say yes to your application again if you're still strong as now in your 80s." And as a result, old Gao was given a special permission to learn driving and apply for a driver's license.

Renewing Love

Old Gao cited what the famous modern Chinese writer Lu Xun said: love needs to be renewed. After a long period of living together, an old couple would feel that there

is nothing to say. The old feeling is gone too.

His wife also complained about Old Gao's bad habits, such as smoking, getting up late, reading newspaper in bed and scattering them on the floor. She got tired of tidying up while he was soundly asleep.

Old Gao said that they used to be busy working and taking care of their children before retirement. After that, more problems appeared as life became dull. Except shopping and cooking, the old couple had nothing else to talk about. Seeing that more and more old couples were on the road to divorce, Old Gao was especially worried.

To change this situation, Old Gao bought a camera and began to learn photography step by step, from adjusting



"After all these years on the road, my old diseases of diabetes and hyperlipidemia are gone. We can make the best contribution to the society and our children by keeping ourselves fit."

the aperture, pressing the shutter, planning the composition to finding a nice scene. From that, the old couple had a new topic and about 30 of their pictures were published. In 1997, they made a surprising move: travel on motorbike. Although objected by many, Old Gao insisted on the ride. At first he was not adjusted and his legs became numb before he rode for long. Yet after six months, he could cover 400 km a day.

There was a funny story in their first trip. One day he rode to Nanjing and his wife was sitting on the back seat. As it was hot, she took

off her shoes. Right after they got into the city proper, he was stopped by a policeman who suspected that he was abducting a woman. Without a word, Old Gao took off his headpiece and, smiling at the policeman, showed him his white hairs. Greatly surprised, the policeman let him go at once without asking any questions.

In 1998, Old Gao became even more ambitious and rode to northeast China on motorbike, covering 6,000 km in his round trip. To him, that was a trip to experience again his first love. "I fell in love with my wife on the beach of Xingcheng in Liaoning Province. At that time I had

just returned from the Korean War and was serving at the Xingcheng garrison. I was receiving a physical check-up in the

1. In order to keep their marriage alive, Old Gao and his wife resolutely keep on travelling.
2. Riding on a motorbike to northeast China, Old Gao experienced again his first sweet love with his wife.
3. Being asked to sign his name as if he were a movie star

sanitarium on the beach when I met her, young and beautiful, who instantly stole my heart. I should have left after the checkup, but I pretended to have a headache so that she could treat me again. After that, I invited her to the beach and she accepted. I found that she was a college graduate and her salary was twice as much as mine, while my educational background was only second grade in middle school. But I didn't give up and, summing up my courage, began to court her."

"At that time, courtship must be kept in absolute secret. To avoid the public, we found a wood about 100 m² where there was a ditch with some rotten stingy leaves. But people in love are slow to tell any bad smell. We fell in love with each other in the wood and dated there until we got married. After the marriage, we were nine kilometres apart. As there was no bus, we could only walk to meet each other. My shoes were worn out after walking on this path for several times."

They made a special trip to cover this nine-kilometre path again to re-experience their old romance on the beach, both filled with myriad of feelings. It was a pity that the



"Only two years beyond 70. I am considered 'advanced in years', and I really can't accept it. In the Tang Dynasty, few could live to be 70. That's why those older than 70 were regarded as rare. Nowadays, however, people's average life expectancy in Wuxi is 77. I'm only 72 and well below the average, yet have been considered to be old. I'm really not an elder in its real sense."

small smelly wood was gone.

In two and a half years of life on the motorbike, Old Gao rode for 50,000 km, took thousands of pictures and wrote over 50,000-word articles. What is more important, the trip has refreshed their love.

Enjoy Retirement on the Road

It was first of all to keep their love alive that Old Gao wanted to drive. It was also a choice of a new life style.

Both of them lived on their low incomes, and their total lifelong saving was merely ¥50,000. But they had planned for its use long ago: to prepare for their children's marriage and for their medical treatment in the old age. Old Gao said, "We are lucky that our children are promising. They wouldn't use our money, but supported us instead. I was more determined to buy a car with the old age money and to travel."

Different from many old people who think they have neither money nor good health, Old Gao believes that if old people can have a wider interest to pursue life and to enrich their mind, they will also be physically stronger and live longer. It is much better than merely staying at home waiting for the end of one's life.

Like a fish in water, Old Gao hit the road just a week after he obtained the driver's license in January 2000.

In the last few years, Old Gao took one trip after another. In his first trip across country, he started from Shanghai, driving along No. 312 national expressway right through to the Horguots Port, covering a total of 12,600 km. The second south-north across the country trip started from Tianya Haijiao (Remotest Corners of the Earth) beach in Sanya City, Hainan Province, to China's most northern North Pole Village in Mohe, Heilongjiang Province, totaling 17,100 km. Old Gao's journey drew a giant cross on the Chinese land with his wheels. In their

third trip, they ventured out into the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. Setting off from Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, they drove via Shanghai, and provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Hubei and Anhui, the loop round trip covers 10,189 km.

After the three trips, they love each other even more. Old Gao said that his wife is getting more tender and considerate. While he was driving, she looked at the maps, took some notes, and fed him with food—a treat he never experienced before. "In the past, she would lose her temper whenever she saw me smoking. Now on the road, she offered to light my cigarette." As she said, "That's to give you a lift."

The unique way of enjoying the retired life has made this 72-year-old man full of energy and humour. He was even more so whenever he talked about driving. He always drives at 140 km/hr, and the longest distance he covered a day was 1,400 km.

Not Just about Driving

For two elderly persons driving in a long journey, there are bound to be many difficulties. It needs a healthy body and calmness in face of danger and emergencies.

Of course it also requires some public relations ploy. Old Gao has all of these.

There were troubles in almost every long-distance trip he took. On the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Old Gao set off from Guiyang to Rongjiang by picking a shortcut. Yet it turned out that the road was very poor and full of stones and mud. It took him seven hours to cover the 160 km, and finally his car was damaged by stones in the mud. Luckily he met a kind-hearted truck driver who helped to drag the car to Rongjiang, which was then carried back to Guiyang by a local car.

The trouble he met in the south-north trans-China trip was mostly the blow up of the tyres. On his 3,000-km trip to the North Pole Village in Mohe, the tyres blew up over 10 times. In places he couldn't have a vacuum tyre replacement, he had to use a makeshift hot patching method to mend the tyre and keep going. His worst experience was that his car paralysed in the wilderness after the tyre blew up repeatedly twice. His mobile had no signals and it was getting dark. The couple were totally helpless. Finally it was decided that his wife would stay to watch the car, and Old Gao would walk to find some help. He was fortunate enough to meet a patrol police car and was taken out of danger. It wasn't until eight in the evening that they reached the North Pole Village in Mohe.



The difficulties in the east-west trans-China trip were met in the Gobi desert in Xinjiang, where the barren land is covered by sharp stones. What is most nasty is that the stones are piled up into ridges, which are higher than the chassis. As his small car has a rather low chassis, it was hard to move ahead. The only way out was to drive very carefully on a stone ridge and bump forward against stones. A small mistake would make the oil sump break. Again, the tyre blew up on the way. It happened that three people from Jiangsu were also driving that way. With their help, he managed to reach the destination.

Toll Free?

Most of China's expressways are built with collected funds, so drivers need to pay tolls. After Old Gao completed his Hainan tour in 2001, he felt strongly about expressway management, "When driving in Hainan, I paid one third more for gasoline than I did in the hinterland. Yet the expressways there are toll free. There are 6,984 km of expressway in the hinterland, which charges almost ¥2,000 for toll fee. Added together with the price for gasoline, we pay about ¥50/100 km. That is one and a half more than what I paid in Hainan. In addition, there are 99 toll stations on the hinterland expressway. If there are six toll-collecting windows at each station, there are almost 600 windows, which need at least 4,000 staffs. If the average annual income is ¥20,000 per person, it will take ¥80 million to keep these toll stations going. Besides, these toll stations need maintenance fees too. So we should learn from Hainan and get rid of all the toll stations."

Postscript

Old Gao's car keeps running on the road. The old couple stays together every day, enjoying beautiful landscapes side by side, and appreciating new things at the same time. They share excitement and happiness as well as setbacks and depression. In fighting with one after another difficulties together, their love grows day by day. In her eyes, he has become more and more manly—resolute, tenacious and unyielding. She said, "When I first fell in love with him, I didn't find in him so many strong points."

Old Gao said that his second half of life would be spent on wheels. I am sure that, as his mileage increases, their love thermometer will follow.



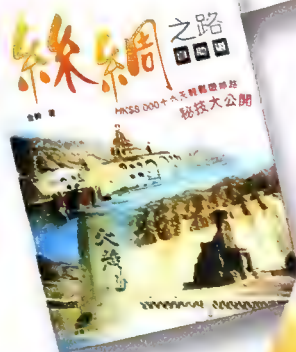
1. Old Gao never thought that he would ever become a model at a car exhibition.
2. Old Gao never thought that he would ever become a model at a car exhibition.
3. A group photo with drivers over 60 years old from Kunming at the foot of the Yulong Snow Mountain in Lijiang, Yunnan Province
4. In September 2000, Old Gao drove from Shanghai along the No. 312 national expressway westward and in 16 days reached the Horguots Port in western Xinjiang.



My Travel Writing Dream

Photos provided by Jin Ling Article by Jackie Tsang

Jin Ling, a nurse, takes to writing and travel. She travels every other month on average and keens on writing travel notes during her journey. After returning home, she sends her travel notes to friends, aiming to encourage them to travel and to experience different cultures. Since 2001, she has published a tourism guide and eight books. And, she is on her way to become the next popular travel writer.



Jin Ling's mother was born of the scholarly family and graduated from a prestigious university in the Mainland China with her two brothers. Under the edifying influence of them, Jin Ling loves reading and writing. Whenever her uncles were over on holidays, they would tell historical stories or taught her how to play Chinese chess. In secondary school she met an earnest Chinese teacher. Under his encouragement, she participated in many composition contests and won some prizes, which affirmed her

on driving her forward, though she could be exhausted sometimes.

In the beginning, Jin Ling wrote her day-to-day account aimlessly. Gradually she poured out her feelings. Later on, she started to collect travel materials. She said, "Quite a lot of my friends love to travel, but they are afraid to be a stranger in a strange place. So I keep track of the bus and train schedules, accommodation fee, new attractions and routes for them."

I myself received such kind gift from Jin Ling about half a year ago when taking part of her travel talk.

Liuyuan depot, I came to know two tourists from Israel, a biology professor and an expert on acupuncture and moxibustion. Moved by their fascination on Chinese culture, I decided to let more people to know the Silk Road and to understand the rich and profound culture of China." After returning to Hong Kong, she spent two months writing the travel notes.

"One day I accidentally find an ad recruiting magazine's writer, so I sent my manuscripts to the publishing company, and the chief-editor there



"I am a typical Aquarius who has boundless imagination. I love writing and freedom. No one can catch up with my thinking."

writing capability. However, though she passed the mandatory exams and was expected to study Chinese in university, she, with the dream of being a nurse, made the decision to study in a nursing school.

A New Dream: Travel Writer

When in nursing school, Jin Ling read a lot of travel writings and began to love travelling. She made good use of her 28 days of holidays. Last year she went to Mainland China, Thailand, India, Japan and Italy in January, March, May, July, September and December respectively, and she wrote travel notes everyday. According to her, the travel bug kept

She planned to give out copies of her travel notes to all of us, but the copy machine broke down and she didn't have any copies at hands. She, however, asked us to leave her our e-mail address so that she could send us the information later. That was nothing but the generous and kind nature of a nurse.

A Turning Point at Silk Road

A dozen years of travelling not only broadened the mind of Jin Ling, but also improved her writing skill. In 2001, she finally realised her dream of completing her journey along the Silk Road, which inspired her endlessly.

"On the way to Dunhaung from

immediately agreed to have my work published." It turned out that the publishing company was planning to publish some travel books in the first place. Furthermore, Jin Ling's book offered both practical travel information and expressed genuine feeling that appealed to readers. This travel book hit the bestsellers list, which encouraged her to follow the dream of becoming a writer.

1. Nursing is her ideal profession and being a writer, her dream. Jin Ling wants both.
2. After the publication of her travel book on Silk Road, Jin Ling began her career as a travel writer.
- 3-5. Travelling inspires Jin Ling at all times. Besides writing, Jin Ling also excels at photography.

Thereupon, Jin Ling made another bold plan to write the serial novels based on her own travel experiences. Aiming to promote different cultures with a new angle, she decided to write fiction that combined the elements of adventure, science and romance.

Jin Ling spent only one month to complete the first adventure novel *Mystery, Love and Exploration of Egypt*. She said, "Egypt, with the history of over five thousand years, provides me with rich materials." She soon found a publisher for her book. Published in August 2002, over 1,000

copies were sold. More copies have been printed to meet the demand.

Let Me Write

In the following two years, she had *Fairy of Dunhuang*, *Magic of Russia*, *Glass Labyrinth of Cambodia* and *Roman Aristocrat* published.

Being a nurse was demanding enough, but Jin Ling determined to write as much as she could. According to her, it usually takes her one month to finish a novel of 240 pages, and she can write 1,000 words in six hours. One time, she wrote non-stop for ten days and such

devotion offered unexpected benefits. For example, she lost five pounds after writing the recently published *Tokyo Fairy Tale*, and saved much money since she skipped shopping and even meals to squeeze time for the extra work.

Besides her novels, Jin Ling also published two travel books on Japan. She said, "Writing novel is harder than travel book, for writing the novel involves reasoning and creativity, not to mention back-breaking research work on historic details. But writing travel book only requires my impressions and a set of travel notes."

To attract young readers, Jin Ling spent over at least two months to plot her story before writing. Take *Tokyo Fairy Tale* for an example, she revised over 10 times and ended up rewriting almost one third of the book.

Although writing novel was harder for Jin Ling, the satisfaction was well worth it.

One Life to Live

"I am not clear about the sale of each book, but I'm happy with my reward." Jin Ling said. According to the website of the public library, her books never stayed on the shelf for long.

Writing brought her fame and gain, but more importantly, new friends from all ages. Jin Ling would encourage the young students to write. "At present I contact closely

"I am a person who is committed to my plan. Once the decision is made, I shall not change it. This attitude is important both in work and writing."





with over 60 readers via e-mailing. Most of them are young and even seven readers become my friends."

Quite a few young readers become interested in the cultures of Egypt and Roman after reading her books. One senior high student began to write two years ago under her encouragement and received the prize in a composition contest, which excited her greatly.

Believing that writing should be cultivated from childhood, Jin Ling always encourages young readers to keep their own travel journal. She even suggested a publisher to hold a composition contest for secondary school students. She said, "Students might have never thought that their travel notes made during Christmas could appear in print. It is quite important to encourage young people whenever we can."

To promote travel writing, Jin Ling always gives lectures in many occasions, such as book fairs and festivals. On top of that, she offers travel info in her magazine and

"I am most satisfied with Plinius, the character I created in Roman Aristocrat. He is defected at birth, suffered from low-esteem and strange, but he secretly longs to be accepted. He reflects a common social phenomenon: how do you treat a minority group? How do you feel if you were one of them?"

website columns, as well as encourages people to seek the opportunity to travel.

As a nurse who needs to face endless sufferings and death, she understands the importance of living life the fullest. "I only wish that I could contribute more to the society when I still can."



1. Jin Ling encouraged the young readers to write.
2. The people of Yunnan fascinate her.
3. Her impression of Pingyao
4. Jin Ling does not forget to write some advice when giving autograph.
5. Jin Ling thoroughly enjoys travelling.
6. As the guest speaker of the travel expo, Jin Ling shared her experience with the audience.
7. Her new tour guide
8. The small calendar made by Jin Ling

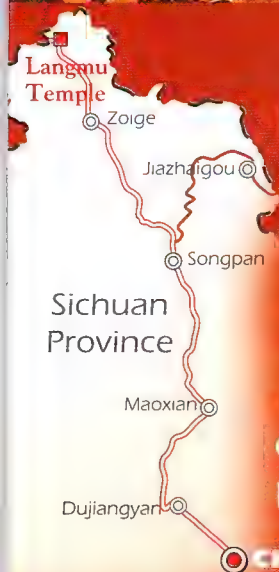
Postscript

On that very day for interview, Jin Ling carries a big knapsack of her works, two photo albums and a gift for me. It is an exquisite monthly calendar, which she made for friends and readers. Besides writing travel notes, she is also very generous to others.



Tibetan New Year at Langmu Temple

Photos & Article by Huang Songhui



Right after Spring Festival last year, I hastily invited some friends to Langmu Temple in Sichuan Province to take pictures of the annual ceremony of sunning the Buddha portrait.

Tibetan New Year falls from the 13th to the 16th of the first lunar month. During this time, Tibetan people, no matter old or young, would all dress up in festive gears and surge towards Langmu Temple. At the same time, a lot of tourists and enthusiastic photographers from home and abroad would also gather here to share the joy of the Tibetan people. This is a really spectacular event.

Langmu Temple, located in the juncture of Aba Prefecture and somewhere between Sichuan and Gansu, consists of two units, namely the Sichuan Temple and Gansu Temple. Tibetan people would shuttle back and forth between the two, burning incenses, kowtowing, praying and watching Tibetan operas.

Since many photos taken at Langmu Temple have won both international and domestic prizes in recent years, the place draws a throng of photographers from all over the world. It is also considered a place to bring good fortunes for photographers.

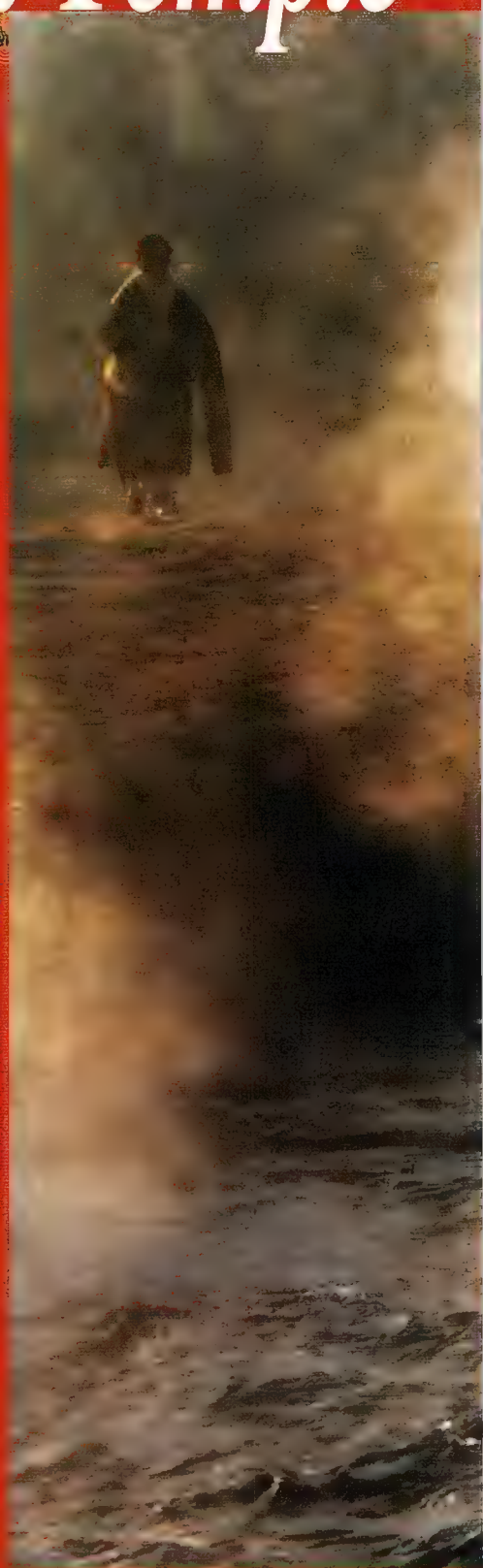
The area has a meandering stream. Morning mist creeps up in the winter days



Praying for Good Fortune by Spreading Longda

Walking clockwise around the temple is one of the ways for Tibetan people to pray for good fortune. While walking around the temple, they would throw the longda paper printed with pictures of Buddha and scriptures to the sky, and they would set off firecrackers and shout for joy.

EOS-1V 16-35/2.8 lens, diaphragm F11, shutter 1/125s



Stream in the Morning

The misty stream at Langmu Temple looks mysterious. The focus is a Tibetan girl washing her hair in the riverside with two people crossing the single-plank bridge as the background.

EOS-V 70-200/2.8 IS lens, diaphragm F16, shutter speed A



above the stream because of the terrestrial heat and temperature difference, transforming the place into a fairyland

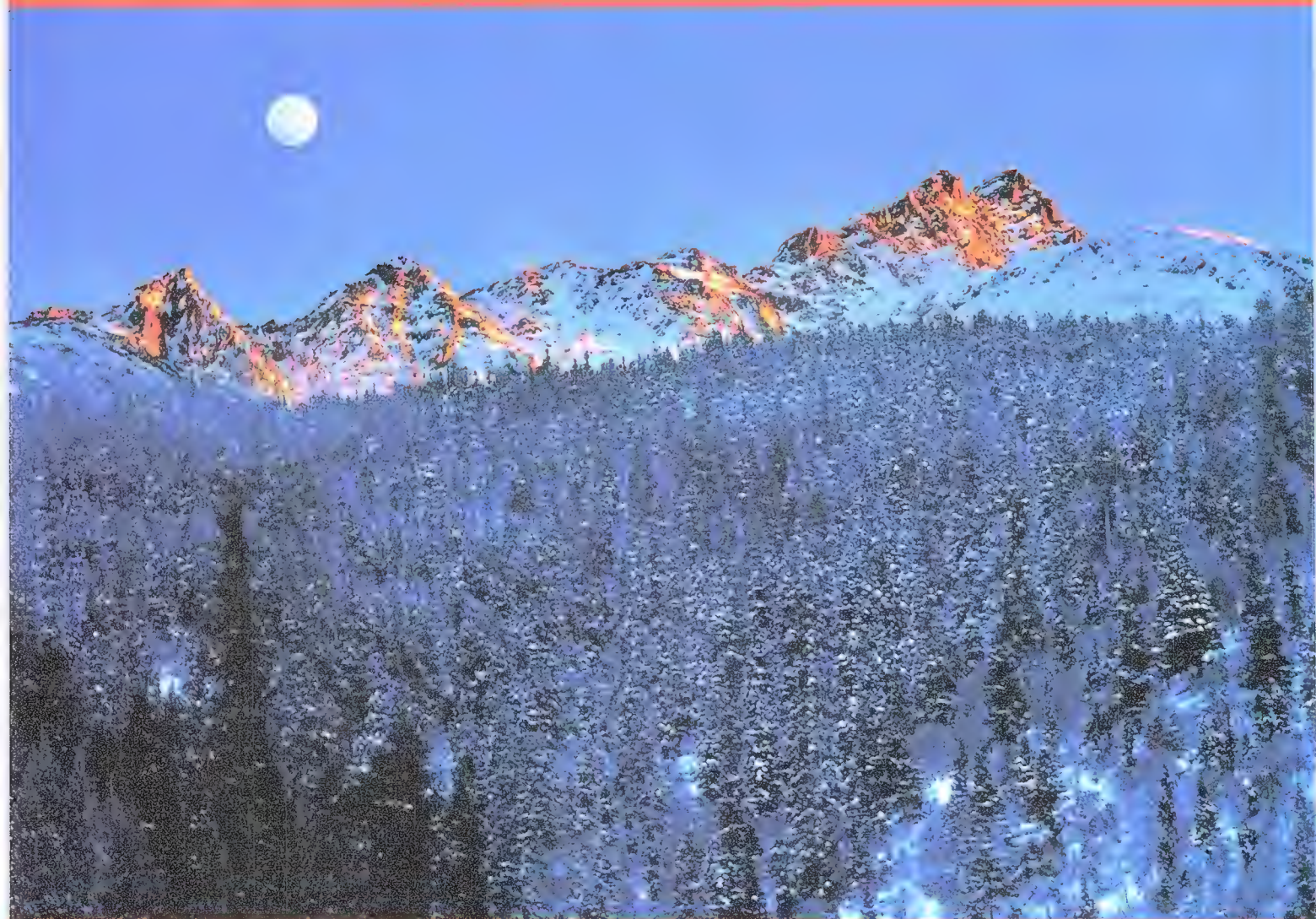
Local people do their morning clean up routine by the stream, and this is the best time for photographers to kill their films. Following the rising of the sun, the mist disappears gradually.

The day for sunning the Buddha portrait is on the 13th of the first lunar month every year. There are numerous fascinating elements for photography during the 13th to the 16th of the first lunar month: Buddhists strolling, pious

expressions of the believers, Lamas reciting scriptures, the crowd sunning the Buddha portrait, spiritual dances....

In addition, if you pass by Aba Prefecture, you can take some photos of the picturesque landscape and visit the ancient Xichang Temple. I took many good pictures during my short stay in Langmu Temple. After coming back to Hong Kong, I sent 15 best pictures to London under the title "Celebrating the Tibetan New Year". Fortunately, I was granted a membership of the British Royal Photographic Society and some of these photos received both international and local awards.

6



Snow-capped Mountains in the Evening Glow

This picture of "Snow-capped Mountains in the Evening Glow" is taken accidentally on the way back to Chengdu from Langmu Temple. It was dark when we passed Aba Prefecture. The snow-capped mountains in the evening glow looked like a painting, so I immediately took this picture by adding grey and changing lens to reduce the contrast between the lighted and dark parts to maintain colour balance. The moonlight in the picture is the credit of two exposure.

EOS-IV 70-200/2.8 IS lens, grey changing lens, diaphragm F11, shutter 1/30s, shutter line, tripod



Lamas Reciting Scriptures

When taking pictures in a dark temple, tripod can avoid the help of a flashlight. This way, the colour looks more natural. The exposure for the snapshot is two second. Before taking the picture, I urged the principle figure to keep his gesture.

EOS-1V 70-200/2.8 IS lens, diaphragm about F11, shutter 2 second, shutter line, tripod

Young Buddhist under the Sun

A young believer, dressed in Tibetan gown appeared at the door with the sun shining brightly. The reflection of the light makes the appearance of the picture vivid. When taking the picture, the technique of exposure at dark part is used.

EOS-1V 70-200/2.8 IS lens, diaphragm F8, shutter P grade



Travel Tips

Transportation: It takes about two hours from Hong Kong or Shenzhen to Chengdu by airplane. There is long distance bus from Chadianzi Bus Station in Chengdu to Zoige. The journey is about 14 hours. Several regular buses go to Zoige from there every day. And there are minibuses from Zoige going directly to Langmu Temple, but not everyday. Or you may take the bus to Hezuo, Gansu Province, and then walk about one hour or take a van to there.

Accommodation: Langmusi Hotel, Tel: (0941) 667 1086

Fee: ¥15 per person (shared bathroom)

Langmusi Township Hotel (also known as Bailong Hotel)

Tel: (0941) 667 1001

Fee: ¥15 per person (shared bathroom)

Note: Langmu Temple is up to 4,000 m above sea level so it is better to rest for one day after arrival. In order to prevent altitude sickness, it is better to bring some medicines such as hongjingian or gaoyuanan.

When and How to Use Your Flash

Photos & Article by Chan Yat Nin

Many cameras these days come with a built-in flash, especially the point and shoot models. This flash may pop out when you're least expected, and the result could be disappointing.

Why is the subject pale while the background in total darkness? Why is the subject suffering from "red eye" syndrome? Why do lively scenes turn out flat and uninspiring in the photograph? The truth is, not knowing how to use the flash properly can be quite a downer.

"Let There Be Light"

What constitutes good use of the flash? A pro usually achieves the following with the flash:

1. Produce sufficient but not excessive light;
2. The lighting should look as soft as possible;
3. The scope and the distance of flash lighting is small, usually it only covers the foreground subject. The background, on the other hand, relies on ambient lighting. The aperture and shutter must work to give appropriate exposure to the background, and this will avoid the distinct separation of subject and background;
4. The direction and angle of the flash should help flatter the subject (no red eyes);

5. Sometimes using the flash will help you get a still image of a moving subject in weak light, such that the background is blurred but the subject is clear, this creates an "in motion" look;

6. One can use the flash to manipulate colour. Through controlling the colour of artificial lighting, one can harmonise or neutralise the colour of ambient light;

7. Use a flash that is activated in rapid succession to shoot subjects in motion, and one can get a special effect where many consecutive images exist in the one photograph;

8. Professional commercial photographers use lighting as the main tool to create a vast array of effects.

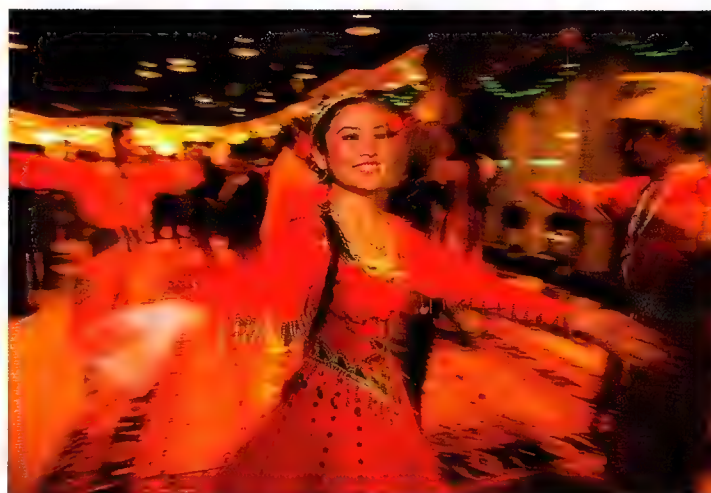
The abovementioned effects are not hard to

achieve for even beginners, it's only that most people do not feel the need to improve on the quality of artificial lighting, so they haven't really considered the basic principles of using the flash.

Changing the Harsh Direct Light

The light producing area of the flash is very small, therefore, it produces very hard-edged light with pronounced shadows that clash with the ambient lighting. In addition, many people take a direct angle, so the light is somewhat flat. To soften the flashlight, the light producing area must be increased. There are many types of diffusers that could transfer the direct flash light to reflected light or diffused light, the larger the area of the reflector, the softer the light.

There are two types of portable flash diffusers: one is the reflector, this can only be used on flashes with heads swivel (for example, tilt the flash head upwards so the light bounces off the 45° reflector and is then reflected to the



ISO 100, 1/15s, F2.8, -2 stops



It is suitable to metre at ISO 800, set the camera at 1/8-1/15 second and 2.8 aperture, then reduce the flash by 2-3 stops. This will make sure that the light of the fire dragon is not overpowered by the light of the flash, resulting perfect exposure.

front); another is the diffuser, which covers the flash with a semi-transparent plastic film, and the light is a lot gentler. Note that even without the diffuser it is still easy to achieve the same effect with whatever's on hand. Sometimes I just tie a white card or white envelope to the flash with a rubber band, transforming it into a reflector. It's even possible to use your own hand as a reflector, this will achieve a flesh coloured warm light. In addition, if you're using a flash where the head can swivel, bounce it off the walls or ceiling to render soft reflected light. But be careful when using reflected light, because the effective strength of the flash is reduced.

There are two other good things about using the wall as a reflector: firstly, one is that the light is much more even than direct flash light on indoor interiors; secondly, the angle of the light is no longer the same as the camera, so it's not flat light. In addition, this is an ideal way to avoid the red-eye effect.

There are other ways to change the angle of the lighting: separate the camera and the flash using a hot shoe extension cord to create a side lit or semi side lit effect; use a wireless flash to render side light or back lighting; or use more than one external flash units to create multi-dimensional light. Some flashes are built in with wireless sensors, and those without such feature can be fitted with a sensor, this way one flash can trigger off multiple flashes.



ISO 100, 1/15s, F2.8, -2 stops, use hand as a reflector for a soft glow

Blend the Available Lighting with the Flash

After taking care of soft lighting and the angle of lighting, it's time to practice using the flash to suit the environment.

Many people use the flash but the result is a distinct separation between the subject and the background, this is because they haven't considered the balance between flash lighting and ambient lighting. In these cases, the aforementioned subject is over-exposed under the flash lighting, but the background is under-exposed because it's outside the range of the flash. The light metre system of the flash is far from foolproof, because it's only good at taking

the average tonal value, and anything other than the average tonal value will be misjudged. From my experience, when using the flash to fill in lighting, first metre the ambient lighting, use this as a basis to determine aperture and shutter speed, then reduce the exposure of the flash by 1-2 stops (the larger the subject is in proportion to the picture, the less reduction of the exposure, vice versa; the further away the background and the darker the background, the more you reduce the exposure). This will give you a picture that synchronises lighting for the subject and the background.

Turn "Dummy Flash" into "Smart Flash"

Perhaps you may ask, what if I only have a point and shoot camera?

It's true that many people only know how to use point and shoot cameras, but as long as you put some thought into it, and provided your camera has some smart features, you can still take great photographs.

Nowadays, many compact cameras have handy functions such as fill-in flash, slow shutter flash, forced flash, flash shut-off, auto flash, anti red-eye flash, don't

Metre at ISO 200, set the camera at 1/15-1/8 second and 2.8 aperture, then reduce the flash by 1-2 stops. The picture produced will have the correct exposure for both subject and background.



The subject is over-exposed, but the background is under-exposed.

In this case, the flash must be turned off and the picture shot using a tripod.

Auto flash: or the so-called "dummy flash". used when there is not much distance between the subject and the background.

👁️ **Anti-red eye flash:**

basically it's a two-time flash, the first flash can make the subject's pupils contract, this prevents "red eye" which is basically showing the blood vessels at the bottom of the eyes; the second flash is for the photograph. By the way, there are many ways to make sure your subject doesn't get "red eye", the trick is to avoid a direct shot at the eyes, red-eye can be avoided by moving the flash higher or to the side, or ask the subject to switch an angle.



ISO 200, 1/8s, F2.8, -2 stops, the flash is reflected off a white envelope

MAR / APR



April 8-25

Azalea Festival

Venue:

Baihuaping in Bijie Prefecture, Qianxi County, Guizhou

What's On: An opening ceremony featuring folk art performances by the ethnic Yi, Miao and Buyi people, a lantern show in Qianxi County, bell-ringing dances, dances to the accompaniment of reed pipes, as well as bull and chicken fights. Tourists are welcome to attend carnivals by a bonfire and tempt their palate with local delicacies.

March 20~May 20

Picasso Painting Show

Venue: Royal Art Museum, Beijing

What's On: 265 paintings, valued at an insurance premium of more than one million yuan, will be displayed near the Imperial Palace. This is the largest display of Picasso's works ever held in Asia. The paintings will be divided into eight parts, covering a wide range of subjects including animal, portrait, poem and classical literature.



March to April

Peach Blossom Festival

Venue: Nanhui County, Shanghai

What's On: Visitors can enjoy the beautiful rural scenery and learn more about the new countryside. The theme of the festival is "coming to Taohuayuan to be close to the nature". Bamboo fences, small bridges, streams, and waterwheel can be found everywhere. Tourists can drive the ox cart, go fishing or simply appreciating the countryside. The ancient bell garden is one of the main places for holding various activities during the festival.

April 4~6

Qintong Boat Festival

Venue: Qintong Town, Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province

What's on: This is a typical folklore activity. During the festival, boats from nearby fishing villages come to Qintong Town for a few days to rejoice. Theatrical performances, dragon and lion dances, and other folk dances are staged right on board the boats. Boat races are also part of the festivity.



April 15~25

Peony Festival

Venue: Luoyang, Henan Province

What's On: Full-length variety shows, including flower watching, lantern show, exhibitions of traditional Chinese calligraphy, painting, photography and symposiums. Business talks will also be held.

At the Wangcheng Park and the Botanical Garden, banquets are arranged for peony admirers and tourists. There will be snacks, refreshments and local dishes served as well.



April 20~25

International Kite Festival

Venue: Weifang, Shandong Province

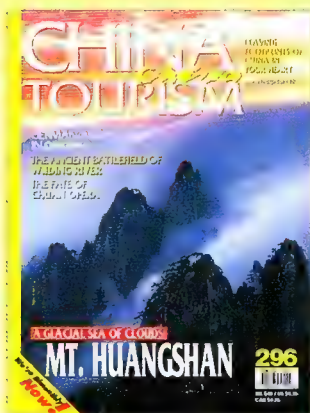
What's On: Weifang is known as the "World Kite Capital", where the head office of the International Kite Federation is located. Kite flying ceremony and international and domestic kite contests will be held at the inauguration ceremony. The 10 best kites will receive an award. Tourists may enjoy Yangjiabu folk art performances.

April 13~15

The Water-Splashing Festival of the Dai in Yunnan

Venue: Jinghong in the Dai Autonomous Prefecture of Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province

What's On: Dragon boat races, fireworks, foot-drum dance, peacock dance, visiting parks and fairs and sprinkling water (symbolising auspiciousness).



Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Mt. Huangshan Mountains	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Fate of Chuan Opera	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Beer and German Architecture of Qingdao	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Ancient Battlefield of Wuding River	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Urumqi: A Charming Land of Snow	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Articles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Travel Tips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Art Design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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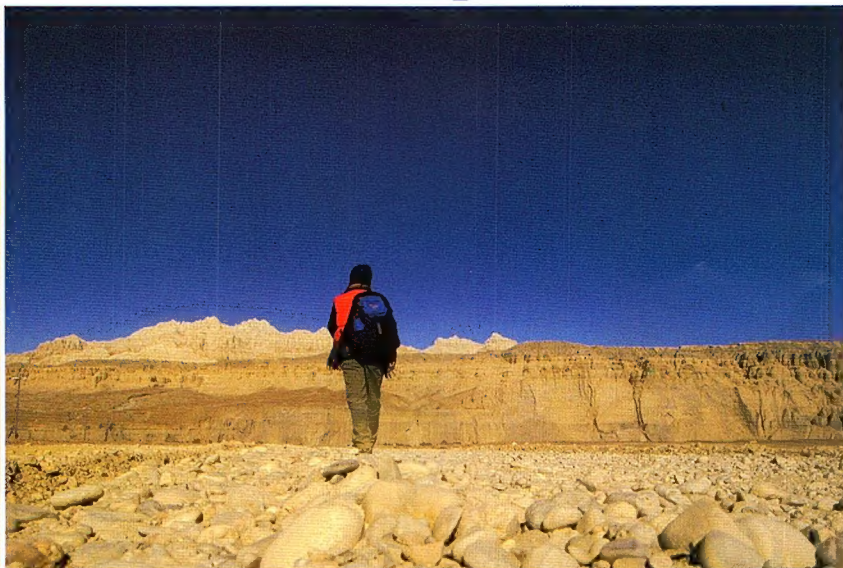
What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE No. **297****Feature Story: Winter Trip to Tibet**

The Tibet Autonomous Region is known by many as the “Roof of the World” due to its elevation of over 13,000 ft above sea level. With its 1,300-year of history, beautiful landscapes, brilliant culture, and mysterious folklore, Tibet is a charming place to visit.

Lhasa (meaning the “sacred place”), Tibet’s capital, has an abundance of sunshine; hence its reputation as the Solar City. It is a centre of politics, economy, transport, and religious activities. There are many places of interest in Lhasa, such as the Potala Palace, Sera Monastery, and the Jokhang Monastery. Lhasa’s original appearance and traditional lifestyle are largely intact at Barhkor Street in the old part of Lhasa, where all sorts of arts and crafts are on sale.

It is difficult for others to understand my passion for Tibet, but I longed to visit Tibet again in winter. Only this time, I didn’t go to any of the tourist attraction during my 10 days in Lhasa. Instead, I joined the locals and really “lived” their daily life: enjoying the afternoon sun, strolling along the Barhkor Street, hanging out in bars, roaming Ali, visiting the ruins in Guge, visiting temples, hiking up the sacred mountains....

**City Snap:****Jinan the “City of Springs”**

Jinan is the capital of Shandong Province on the East Coast of China. It has a continental monsoon climate and clear-cut seasonal change. Due to its long history, the State Council designated Jinan as a famous historical and cultural city. Most of the trees in Jinan are willows and a majority of the flowers is lotus. As Jinan boasts a number of natural springs amid picturesque scenery, it is known as the “City of Springs”.

Discoveries:**The Last Tribe of Gunmen — Basha Miao**

Nicknamed the “Last Tribe of Gunmen”, the people of this special branch of Miao tribe, Basha, always carry guns and falchions with them. They live in a place forgotten by modern civilisation, and the area is no more than 18 km². The men in this tribe keep a unique hairstyle with a small hank of hair tied up. Guarding against the invasion has become their habits. They make living in the mountains by day and live in the house made with tree trunks at night.

I wrote a feature story about them about four years ago, only to find that their life have turned upside down since the story went to press.



FOCUS ON XINJIANG

On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, all providing tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem embedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak, the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uygur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique and colourful culture.



FOCUS ON SHAANXI

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.



FOCUS ON YUNNAN

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate all year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-la, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



The Call of China's West

FOCUS ON TIBET

The Tibet Autonomous Region of China is a land of mystery for tourists, a land of wonders for explorers, a land of purity for Buddhists, and the ultimate challenge for mountaineers. Its beautiful landscapes, unique geographical features and rich cultural legacy continue to attract an increasing number of visitors.

The countless attractions of Tibet make it impossible to include them all in one book. This photographic publication offers an introduction to some of the Region's most celebrated features: the Potala Palace and its precious collection of cultural relics; the Jokhang Temple with strings of worshippers prostrating themselves before it; the Shoton Festival and the Sunning of Buddha ceremony; the ruins of the mystical Guge Kingdom; and the amazing Qiangtang Grassland...

At the same time, *Focus on Tibet* outlines the six major routes to Tibet and the many stunning landscapes found along the way.



Paperback Only

FOCUS ON GUIZHOU

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals. It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.



FOCUS ON GUANGXI

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the diverse traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.



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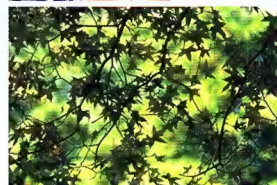
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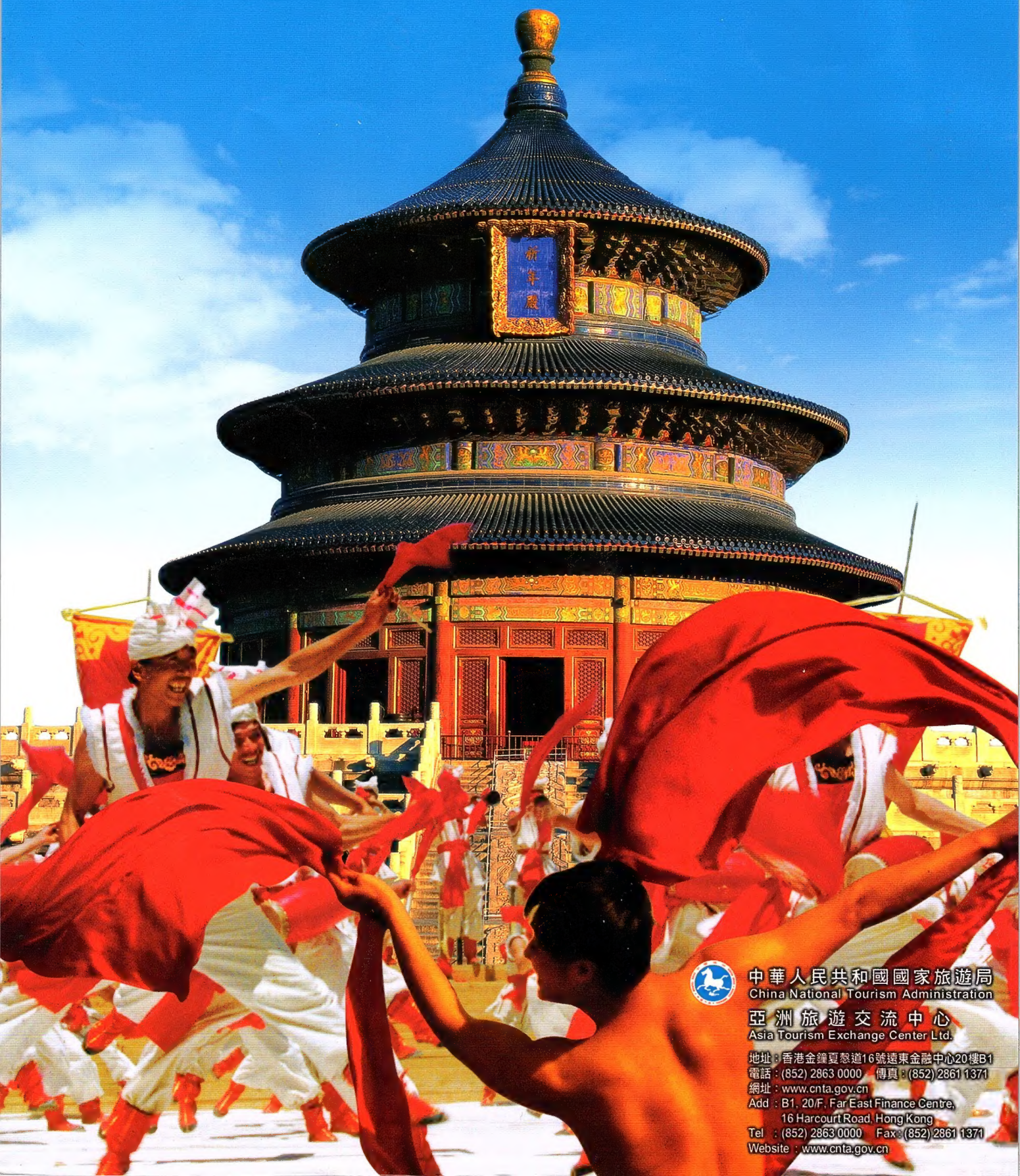
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